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A MEMOIR
OF THE LIFE, CHARACTER
AND PRINCIPLES OF

John Calvin

BY THE
REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D.D.

New Edition

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PREFACE.

THE fact that John Calvin was led by the grace of God to embrace and defend all the essential principles of doctrine and polity which distinguish the system of Presbyterianism has exposed him to the unceasing calumny of all those to whom that system is unpalatable. Romanists, prelatists, and errorists of every name, have vied with one another in their efforts to blacken his character and detract from his fame. The defence of Calvin against these misrepresentations is necessary for the glory of that God who called him by his rich grace, for the honor of that truth in whose cause Calvin lived and died, and for the maintenance of that Church to which he was attached, and which is built upon the foundation laid by apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone. And this defence is in a peculiar manner the privilege and duty of Pres-

byterians, with whom Calvin has been so generally identified.

Actuated by these views, the alumni of the theological seminary at Princeton appointed the author to deliver a discourse in vindication of the life and character of Calvin at their anniversary meeting in May, 1843. The substance of the following little work was accordingly delivered in Philadelphia, in the Second Presbyterian church, during the sessions of the General Assembly. At the request of the alumni it has since been published in some of our religious papers, and it is now prepared, by the desire of the Board of Publication of the Presbyterian Church, for publication as one of their volumes.

That it may lead the members of our beloved Church more highly to estimate and prize the character and achievements of Calvin, that they may thus be incited to bless God (who raised up Calvin and qualified him for his work) for his past dealings with his Church, while they humbly look for his continued guidance and protection, and that the inhabitants of this country may be brought by it more deeply to appreciate

the influence of Calvin and of the system he advocated in securing those blessings of religious and civil freedom by which they are distinguished, is the sincere prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHERS.

THIS work, by the Rev. Dr. Smythe, has proved so valuable and so useful that, the original edition having been exhausted, it is now stereotyped and this new edition offered to the public by

THE PUBLISHERS.

NOVEMBER, 1881.

THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JOHN CALVIN.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

PRESBYTERIANS—that is, the great body of the Reformed Church throughout the world—have been very commonly denominated "Calvinists." Not that they are followers of Calvin either in doctrine or in discipline, since the doctrines and discipline embraced by Presbyterians existed previous to the appearance of Calvin and were adopted, and not originated, by him. Calvin, however, being the great theologian of the Reformers, so well defended, so clearly expounded and so perfectly systematized these principles as to connect with them, wherever they are known, his illustrious name. The term "Calvinist" was first employed in the year 1562 in

reference to the standards of the Huguenots or French Reformed churches, which Calvin drew up, from which time it came to be employed as characteristic of all those who adopted similar doctrinal principles.* These principles, however, no more originated with Calvin than did the Bible, for they are the very same which were held forth by the apostles, which were proclaimed in all the apostolic churches, which were maintained by the ancient Culdees, by the Waldenses and by other pure and scriptural bodies, and which were eminently defended by the celebrated Augustine and by other divines in every period of the Church.

As Presbyterians we hold no principles which are not found in the word of God. We claim no antiquity less recent than the primeval organization of the Church of God on earth. In our Christian form, we build upon the only foundation laid in Zion, the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone. We call no man master upon earth. We know no man after the flesh. We call neither Abraham nor Moses, neither

*Scott's *Continuation of Milner*, p. 472; Waterman's *Life of Calvin*, p. 210.

Paul nor Augustine, neither Luther nor Calvin, "our father." We are in subjection to no man, nor do we wear the name or livery of any. We are Christians in doctrine and Presbyterians in polity, our doctrine being deduced from the Scriptures, and Presbytery being the only polity known to the apostles or to the apostolic and primitive churches of Christ.

But, while we so speak, let us not be supposed to disparage the name and character of Calvin, or to depreciate as either shame or reproach the application of the term "Calvinists." In the great body of Calvin's principles, though not by any means in all, we concur. To the life, character and conduct of Calvin we look with reverence and high esteem. And, while we apologize not for his errors or his infirmities, yet, were we required to be called by any human cognomen, there is perhaps no other man, since the days of the apostles, by whose name we would prefer to be designated.

The reputation and character of this distinguished Reformer have been opposed by every artifice of ingenuity, sophistry and malignity. The vilest and most baseless calumnies have been heaped upon his memory. The most sense-

less and improbable stories have been invented to blacken his character and to detract from his illustrious fame. A single event, distorted, misrepresented and in all its circumstances imputed to his single agency, although consummated by the civil authorities of the republic, and although in accordance with the established sentiments of the age, has been made to color his whole life, to portray his habitual conduct, and to cover with infamy the man and his cause. Now, in these very efforts of his enemies, Romish and prelatist, and in their nature, source and evident design, we find a noble testimony to the genius, power and worth of Calvin. He who opposes himself to existing customs and prevalent opinions must anticipate resistance in proportion to the success with which his efforts are accompanied. And while such opposition, in itself considered, does not prove that such a man is right in his scheme of reformation, but only that his plan involves the subversion of established forms, yet may we learn the character of such an intended reformation and of such a bold reformer by the very nature of that opposition which is brought to bear against him. And if, as in the present case, we find that in order to withstand the overwhelm-

ing influence of such a man his enemies are driven to the invention of forgeries and the grossest fabrications, we may with certainty infer that his personal character was irreproachable. In like manner, when these enemies are led to meet the arguments of such a man by personal invective and abuse, we may be equally assured that his is the cause of truth and righteousness and theirs the cause of error. Truth is strong in her conscious and imperishable virtue. She therefore seeks the light, courts investigation and offers herself to the most impartial scrutiny. Error, on the contrary, having no inward strength, is weak and cowardly. She seeks the covert and the shade. She clothes herself in the garments of concealment. She assumes borrowed robes and names, and endeavors by artifice and treachery to accomplish her base designs. In Calvin, therefore, we have a tower built upon the rock, rearing its lofty head to the clouds, visible from afar and open to the observation of all men, which, though the floods roar and the winds arise against it, yields not to the fury of the tempest, because its foundations are secure. In the enemies of Calvin we behold the secret plotters of his ruin, who, conscious of his invincibility when opposed by any fair or honorable

onset, dig deep within the bosom of the earth, and, there concealed by darkness and buried from all human sight, ply their nefarious arts to sap and undermine, and by well-concerted stratagem to overwhelm in destruction, an innocent and unsuspecting victim.

CHAPTER II.

CALVIN WAS ONE OF THE MOST EMINENT OF ALL THE REFORMERS, AND REMARKABLE FOR HIS COURAGE.

"CALVIN," said Bishop Andrews, "was an illustrious person, and never to be mentioned without a preface of the highest honor." "Of what account," says his great opponent, Hooker, "the Master of Sentences was in the Church of Rome, the same, and more, amongst the preachers of Reformed churches Calvin had purchased; so that the perfectest divines were judged they which were skillfullest in Calvin's writings; his books almost the very canon to judge both doctrine and discipline by." And again, concerning his *Commentaries* and his *Institutes*, which together make up eight parts out of nine of his works, Hooker adds, "We should be injurious unto virtue itself if we did derogate from them whom their industry hath made great. Two things of principal moment there are which have deservedly procured him honor throughout the world: the one, his exceeding

pains in composing the *Institutes of the Christian Religion;* the other, his no less industrious travails for exposition of Holy Scripture according unto the same *Institutions.* In which two things whosoever they were that after him bestowed their labor, he gained the advantage of prejudice against them if they gainsayed, and of glory above them if they consented."

Such was the estimation in which Calvin was held by his contemporaries, both continental and Anglican. To Cranmer and his associates in the English Reformation he was all in all. They sought his counsel, leaned upon his wisdom, were guided by his directions and sustained by his consolations. His name is found enrolled with honor in the Book of Convocation so late as the seventeenth century, and his spirit still breathes through those Articles which have preserved the Protestantism and the orthodoxy of the English Church.*

Among the continental Reformers, Calvin was equally pre-eminent. Giants as they were in intellect, in acquirement and in prowess, he towered above them all like Saul among the people of Israel. Where all were great, he was greatest. Though naturally less bold than Luther, he was

* *London Christian Observer*, 1803, pp. 143, 144.

enabled to manifest a superhuman bravery, and was even in this respect not a whit behind that noble champion of the truth. "He was," says Bayle, "frighted at nothing." Exquisitely sensitive and timid by constitution, he was from his earliest years obliged to bend to the inflexible rule of duty, and thus became habituated to self-sacrifice. When God called him by his grace to the knowledge of the truth and power of the gospel, he took up his cross to follow Jesus, suffering the loss of all things and not counting his life dear unto him. The storm of persecution was then at its height. Its fiery bolts were spreading consternation and alarm throughout all France. The Parliament was on the watch. The spies of the Sorbonne and of the monks were found creeping into churches and colleges, and even into the recesses of private dwellings. The *gens-d'armes* patrolled the highways to hunt down every favorer of the Reform.* Then it was that Calvin enlisted as a good soldier under the Captain of salvation, buckled on the armor of God and threw himself boldly on the Lord's side. His whole subsequent course proves that through the grace of God he was valorous even

* See D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, vol. iii., p. 643, English edition.

to daring. At the risk of his life he ventured back to Paris in 1532, in the very midst of abounding persecution, that he might defend the truth. While the whole city of Geneva was in a ferment of rage, he hesitated not to suspend the celebration of the communion, and, when publicly debarred the use of the pulpit, to appear in it as usual. When the plague had broken out and was carrying death and destruction around, Calvin was found ready to offer himself as a chaplain to its infected victims. During his contests with the Libertine faction he frequently attended the summons of the senate when his life was exposed to imminent danger from the swords of the contending parties, many of whom were anxious for an opportunity, according to their summary mode of punishment, to throw him into the Rhone. In the year 1553, through the influence of Bertelier, the grand council of two hundred decreed that all cases of excommunication should be vested in the senate, from which body Bertelier obtained two letters of absolution. The resolution of Calvin, however, was taken, and he was not to be daunted. He first procured the senate to be called together, stated his views and his determination, and endeavored, but in vain, to induce them to revoke their indulgence granted to Bertelier.

He received for answer that "the senate changed nothing in their former decision." After preaching, however, on the Sunday morning previously to the administration of the Lord's Supper, in a solemn tone and with uplifted hand he uttered severe denunciations against profaners of the holy mysteries; "And for my own part," said he, "after the example of Chrysostom, I avow that I will suffer myself to be slain at the table rather than allow this hand to deliver the sacred symbols of the Lord's body and blood to adjudged despisers of God." This was uttered with such authority and produced such an effect that Perrin himself immediately whispered to Bertelier that he must not present himself as a communicant. He accordingly withdrew; and the sacred ordinance, says Beza, "was celebrated with a profound silence and under a solemn awe in all present, as if the Deity himself had been visible among them."

But there was another scene which occurred amid those factious commotions by which Calvin was continually distressed which deserves to be immortalized. Perrin and others having been censured by the consistory, and failing to obtain redress from the senate, appealed to the council of two hundred Disorder, violence and sedition reigned through-

out the city. On the day preceding the assembly Calvin told his brethren that he apprehended tumult, and that it was his intention to be present. Accordingly, he and his colleagues proceeded to the council-house, where they arrived without being noticed. Before long they heard loud and confused clamors, which were constantly increasing. The crowd heaved to and fro with all the violence of a stormy ocean chafed into ungovernable fury and ready to overwhelm its victims in destruction. Calvin, however, like Cæsar, cast himself, alone and unprotected, into the midst of the seditious multitude. They stood aghast at his fearless presence. His friends rallied around him. Lifting his voice, he told them he came to oppose his body to their swords, and, if blood was to flow, to offer his as the first sacrifice. Rushing between the parties, who were on the point of drawing their swords in mutual slaughter, he obtained a hearing, addressed them in a long and earnest oration, and so completely subdued their evil purposes that peace, order and tranquillity were immediately restored.

Such, by the grace of God, was the weak, timorous and shrinking Calvin. Firm as the mountains of his country, he stood unmoved amid the storms that beat around him. He lifted his soul

undaunted above those mists which to all others shrouded the future in terrific gloom, and, exercising a faith strong in the promises of God, could behold afar off the triumphs of the cause. As the twelve apostles, when left to themselves, fled like frightened sheep at the approach of danger, when endued with power from on high were made bold as lions, so did the perfect love of Christ's truth and cause cast out all fear from the bosom of Calvin. Even in point of courage, therefore, he was not inferior to the very chiefest of Reformers. But in learning, in sound and correct judgment, in prudence and moderation, in sagacity and penetration, in system and order, in cultivation and refinement of manners, in the depth and power of his intellect, Calvin shone forth amid the splendid galaxy of illustrious Reformers a star of the first magnitude and brightest lustre.

Such was the man whose life and character I now review.

CHAPTER III.

THE GENIUS AND THE WORKS OF CALVIN.

IN his early youth Calvin manifested that genius and eloquence which characterized him as a man. The same intensity of will, the same rapidity of thought, the same retentiveness of memory, the same comprehensiveness of judgment, which enabled him to discharge the inconceivable labors of his maturer years, gave him an easy victory over all his competitors for college fame; so that it became necessary to withdraw him from the ordinary ranks and to introduce him singly to the higher walks of learning. In his twenty-third year he published a commentary on Seneca's treatise *De Clementia*, full of learning and eloquence. In his twenty-fourth year we find him at Paris preparing orations to be delivered by the rector of the university and homilies to be recited to their people by the neighboring clergy. During the next year he gave to the world his

work on the sleep of the soul after death, in which he manifests an intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures and with the works of the early fathers. Thus, in the morning of his life, before others had awakened from the dreams of boyhood or realized the responsibilities of maturer life, he was pronounced by Scaliger, who was indisposed to give praise to any, to be the most learned man in Europe. He was only in his twenty-sixth year when he published the first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, with an address to the persecuting king of France which has ever been esteemed a production unrivaled for classic purity, force of argument and persuasive eloquence. Designed as a defence of the calumniated Reformers and an exposure of the base injustice, tyranny and corruption of their persecutors, this work became the bulwark of the Reformation and the stronghold of its adherents. It was made the confession of faith of a large portion of the Protestant world and the text-book of every student. It was recommended by a convocation held at Oxford to the general study of the English nation, and long continued to be the standard work in theology in the English universities. The pope makes it one of his anath-

ematizing charges against Queen Elizabeth that the impious mysteries and institutes, according to Calvin, are received and observed by herself, and even enjoined upon all her subjects to be obeyed.* According to Schultingius, the English gave these *Institutes* a preference to the Bible. "The bishops," he says,† "ordered all the ministers that they should learn them almost to a word, that they should be kept in all the churches for public use." He informs us also that they were studied in both the universities; that in Scotland the students of divinity began by reading these *Institutes;* that at Heidelberg, Geneva, Lausanne, and in all the Calvinistic universities, these *Institutes* were publicly taught by the professors; that in Holland ministers, civilians and the common people, even the coachman and the sailor, studied this work with great diligence; that, esteeming it as a pearl of great price, they had it bound and gilt in the most elegant manner; and that it was appealed to as a standard on all theological questions. According to this writer, these *Institutes* were considered more dangerous to the cause of the papacy than all the other writings of the Reformers.

* Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, vol. ii., p. 347.

† Waterman's *Life*, p. 137.

As an author Calvin's fame will go on brightening more and more. The Latin language was in his day the language of the learned and of books. But "What Latin?" asks Monsieur Villers. "A jargon bearing all the blemishes of eleven centuries of corruption and bad taste."* And yet the French encyclopædists testify that "Calvin wrote in Latin as well as is possible in a dead language,"† and an Episcopalian of Oxford in 1839 has said that "for majesty when the subject required it, for purity, and, in short, every quality of a perfect style, it would not suffer by a comparison with that of Cæsar, Livy or Tacitus."‡

The modern idioms also were at that time in the same uncultivated, rude state into which long want of use had plunged them. Now, what Luther did for the German, Calvin accomplished for the French language; he emancipated, he renovated—nay, he created—it. The French of Calvin became eventually the French of Protestant France, and is still admired for its purity by the most skillful critics.§

* Villers's *Essay on the Reformation*, p. 238.

† Article "Geneva."

‡ Preface to Calvin's *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. i., p. 18.

§ D'Aubigné, iii. 639, 641; French *Encyclopœdia* as above; Taylor's *Biography of the Age of Elizabeth*, ii., p. 17.

Of his *Institutes* we have already spoken—"the most remarkable literary work to which the Reformation gave birth." Not less valued was his *Catechism*, now too much neglected and unstudied. He published it in French and Latin. It was soon translated into the German, English, Dutch, Scotch, Spanish, Greek and Hebrew languages, and was made one of the standards of the Church of Scotland, the basis of the early Catechism in the Church of England, and the model of the Catechism published by the Westminster Assembly of Divines.*

The judgment of his great opponent, Arminius, upon Calvin's merits as a commentator has been sustained by the verdict of three centuries and his present advancing reputation. Arminius says: "After the Holy Scriptures, I exhort the students to read the commentaries of Calvin; for I tell them that he is incomparable in the interpretation of Scripture, and that his commentaries ought to be held in greater estimation than all that is delivered to us in the writings of the ancient Christian fathers; so that, in a certain eminent spirit of prophecy, I

* Waterman, 35; Waterman's edition, Hartford, 1815; Irving's *Confessions of Faith*, Appendix, and Preface, p. 124; and Neal's *Puritans*, ii. 224.

give the pre-eminence to him beyond most others—indeed, beyond them all."*

But the labors of Calvin were as multiplied and arduous as his achievements were marvelous. The Genevan edition of his works amounts to twelve folio volumes. Besides these, there exist at Geneva two thousand of his sermons and lectures, taken down from his mouth as he delivered them. He was but twenty-eight years in the ministry altogether. He was always poor, so as not to be able to have many books. The sufferings of his body from headache, weakness and other complaints were constant and intense; so that he was obliged to recline on his couch a part of every day. It was only the remnants of his time left from preaching and correspondence he devoted to study and writing. And yet every year of his life may be chronicled by his various works. In the midst of convulsions and interruptions of every kind he pursued his commentaries on the Bible as if sitting in the most perfect calm and undisturbed repose. His labors were indeed incredible and beyond all comparison. He allowed himself no recreation whatever. He preached and wrote with headaches that

* In Scott, 497. See the similar judgment of Scaliger in Bayle, 265, and Beza, 120, 204.

would, says Beza, have confined any other person to bed.

Calvin was a member of the sovereign council of Geneva, and took a great part in the deliberations as a politican and legislator. He corrected the civil code of his adopted country. He corresponded with Protestants throughout Europe both on religious subjects and on state affairs, for all availed themselves of his experience in difficult matters. He wrote innumerable letters of encouragement and consolation to those who were persecuted, imprisoned, condemned to death for the gospel's sake. He was a constant preacher, delivering public discourses every day in the week, and on Sunday preaching twice. He was professor of theology, and delivered three lectures a week. He was president of consistory, and addressed remonstrances or pronounced other ecclesiastical sentences against delinquent church-members. He was the head of the pastors, and every Friday, in an assembly called the *congregation*, he pronounced before them a long discourse on the duties of the evangelical ministry. His door was constantly open to refugees from France, England, Poland, Germany and Italy, who flocked to Geneva, and he organized for these exiled Protestants special parishes. His corre-

spondence, commentaries, controversial writings, etc., would form annually, during the period of thirty-one years, between two and three octavo volumes; and yet he did not reach the age of fifty-five. When laid aside by disease from preaching he dictated numberless letters, revised for the last time his *Christian Institutes*, almost rewrote his *Commentary on Isaiah*, frequently observing that "nothing was so painful to him as his present idle life." And when urged by his friends to forbear he would reply, "Would you have my Lord to find me idle when he cometh?" "Oh, the power of Christian faith and of the human will! Calvin did all these things—he did more than twenty eminent doctors—and he had feeble health, a frail body and died at the age of fifty-five years. We bow reverently before this incomparable activity, this unparalleled devotion of Calvin to the service of his divine Master."

CHAPTER IV.

CALVIN VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF AMBITION, AND HIS TRUE GREATNESS AND WONDERFUL INFLUENCE SHOWN.

GIFTED with such powers of mind and stored with such treasures of knowledge, who can question the sincerity of Calvin's adherence to the principles of the Reformation? He has been charged, however, with ambitious motives and with aspiring to a new popedom. Shameless calumny! With the pathway to honor, emolument and fame opened to him, did he not choose, like Moses, "rather to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"? Did he not resign the benefices which he held, and which by covert conduct he might still have retained, and throw himself, poor and unpatronized, among the houseless wanderers who were everywhere spoken against as not worthy to live? Did he not design to spend his time in retirement, as deeming himself unfit to take part in the noble strife? Was

he not led to visit Geneva by the invisible hand of God, who had obstructed his route through Dauphiny and Savoy to Basle or Strasburg, where he meant to retire? Was it not after many refusals and the extremest urgency he consented to remain in that city? And when appointed professor of divinity by the consistory and magistrates, did he not earnestly decline the office of pastor, which they also insisted upon his undertaking? When banished from that place, did he not again seek retirement and with manifest reluctance resume the duties of professor and of pastor, which Bucer, Capito, Hedio and the senate of Strasburg conferred upon him? And when the whole city of Geneva entreated his return among them, did he not say that "the farther he advanced the more sensible he was how arduous a charge is that of governing a church, and that there was no place under heaven he more dreaded than Geneva"? How did he praise and exalt Melanchthon and Luther!* How did he bear with their opposition to his views, and their silence when he wrote to them in friendship! Did he not, when he had succeeded in founding the college at Geneva, prefer Beza to the presidency, and himself become a pro-

*Scott's *Continuation of Milner*, vol. iii. 175, 382, 387, 414.

fessor under him?* Did he not so late as 1553, in a letter to the minister of Zurich, call Farel "the father of the liberties of Geneva and the father of that church"? Ambitious! "A most extraordinary charge," says Beza, "to be brought against a man who chose *his* kind of life, and in this state, in this church, which I might truly call the very seat of poverty." No; the love of truth and of the cause of Christ was the master-passion of his soul. He realized what millions only profess, and judging, with the apostle, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead, and that he thus died that they who are made alive by his Spirit should not henceforth live unto themselves, he consecrated his body, soul and spirit unto God. "Since," says he, "I remember that I am not my own nor at my own disposal, I give myself up, tied and bound, as a sacrifice to God." When, therefore, he was driven from Geneva by a blinded faction, amid the lamentations of his whole flock, he could say, "Had I been in the service of men, this would have been a poor reward; but it is well: I have served HIM who never fails to repay his servants whatever he has promised." When the people of Strasburg consented for a season to lend

* Scott's *Continuation of Milner*, vol. iii., p. 466.

his services to the people of Geneva, they insisted on his retaining the privileges of a citizen and the stipend they had assigned him while resident among them. Was it ambition that led Calvin resolutely to decline the generous offer? Was it ambition that led him to settle at Geneva, where his stipend, which was one hundred crowns a year, barely supported his existence, and which, nevertheless, he pertinaciously refused to have increased? Did he not for years abstain from all animal food at dinner, rarely eating anything after breakfast till his stated hour for supper? and was not the whole amount of his remaining property, including his library, which sold high, less than three hundred crowns? Let the infidel Bayle, who was struck with astonishment by these facts, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

The charge of ambition is founded upon the innate and surpassing greatness of Calvin. An exile from his country, without money, without friends, he raised himself by merit alone to a dominion over the minds of men. His throne was in the hearts of those who knew him; his sceptre, truth; his laws, the silent influence of principle. Consider the difficulties which he en-

*Bayle's *Dictionary*, art. "Calvin, BB.," and Scott, 489.

countered at Geneva. When he arrived at that place, in 1536, the city had neither religious nor political organization. Calvin undertook the task of giving it both.* But in order to do so he had first to cleanse the Augean stable, for to this the demoralized condition of Geneva might well be compared. The long reign of ignorance and superstition, the extreme corruption of the Romish clergy, the relaxation of manners consequent upon intestine feuds and open war, the licentiousness, anarchy and insubordination resulting from the first excesses of unrestrained freedom, the disorders occasioned by party spirit and factious demagogues, and the secret attachment of many to the discarded system of popery,—these were causes sufficient to lead to the unparalleled dissoluteness of a city where great numbers of houses of ill-fame were recognized and licensed by the magistrates, with a regular female superior, who bore the name of Reine du Bordel. Calvin proved himself to be not only a theologian of the highest order, but also a politician of astonishing sagacity. Morals became pure; the laws of the state were revised and thoroughly changed; the ecclesiastical tribunals were made independent of the civil,

*Dr. Taylor's *Biography of the Age of Elizabeth*, vol. ii., p. 24.

and a system of the strictest discipline established; the sect of the Libertines was overthrown; the most powerful factions were dispersed; the enemies of truth and purity, though often triumphant and always violent, were made to lick the dust; so that the wickedness of the wicked came to an end and righteousness prevailed. The effects of Calvin's influence, says a recent and prejudiced historian, "after the lapse of ages, are still visible in the industry and intellectual tone of Geneva."* From having been a small and unimportant town Geneva became the focus of light, the centre of attraction and the source of incalculable influence upon the destinies of Europe and the world. Calvin's seminary supplied teachers and ministers to most of the Reformed states of Europe. Geneva was honored with the title of "the Mother of Protestantism." Lodgings could with difficulty be found for the multitude of students that came to sit at the feet of the man whom Melanchthon called "the divine." It was to this "metropolis of Presbyterianism" that all the proscribed exiles who were driven from other countries by the intolerance of popery "came to get intoxicated with Presbytery and republicanism," to carry back

* *History of Switzerland* (London, 1832), p. 227.

with them those seeds which have sprung up in the republic of Holland, the commonwealth of England, the glorious revolution of 1688 and our own American confederation.

Would you see the amazing power and influence of Calvin, read the history of his triumph over Bolsec, one of those hydras of faction that successively shot up their revegetating heads in Geneva.* Behold Troillet, another of his enemies, when about to die, sending for Calvin that he might confess his faults, declaring that he could not die in peace without obtaining his forgiveness. Behold him at Berne debating against Castalio and others with such power that his opponents were henceforth excluded from that canton. Thus, like another Hercules, armed with the simple club of God's holy word, did he destroy the numerous monsters who threatened to overthrow the truth as it is in Jesus.

*Scott's *Milner*, iii. 404, and Waterman, 70. "Those," says Rousseau, "who regard Calvin as a mere theologian are ill-acquainted with the extent of his genius. The preparation of our wise edicts, in which he had a great part, does him as much honor as his *Institutes*. Whatever revolution time may effect in our worship, while the love of country and liberty shall exist among us the memory of that great man shall never cease to be blessed."

How wonderful was the influence, under God, of this single man! The Reformed churches in France adopted his confession of faith and were modeled after the ecclesiastical order of Geneva. To him England is indebted for her Articles, for a purified liturgy and for all her psalmody.* To him Scotland owes her Knox, her Buchanan and her Melville, her ecclesiastical system, and all that has made her proudly eminent among the nations of the earth. To him Northern Ireland is indebted for the industry, manufactures, education, religion and noble spirit of independence and freedom which she received from her first settlers, the followers of Calvin.† To his letters, dedication and exhortations every nation of any eminence in his day was accustomed to pay profound respect. These writings had a salutary influence even upon the Romish Church. Her shame was excited, abuses were abandoned, discipline enforced and the necessity of a reformation confessed. Nor was this influence merely ecclesiastical or political. The increase of his own church was, we are told, wonderful, and he could say, even during his life, "I have numberless spiritual children throughout the world." His

*Sibson in Beza's *Life*, Am. ed., pp. 111, 112.

†Waterman, p. 34; Scott, *op. cit.*, 370; Beza's *Life*, p. 101.

contemporaneous reputation was even greater than his posthumous fame, because all parties united in rendering him honor. Many Romanists, says Bayle, "would do him justice if they durst." Scaliger said he was "the greatest wit the world had seen since the apostles;" while the Romish bishop of Valence called him "the greatest divine in the world." * The Romanists, too, have been forced to acknowledge the falsity of their infamous calumnies published against his morals.† Such was the terror he had inspired in this great apostasy that when a false report of his death was circulated, they decreed a public procession and returned thanks to God in their churches for his death.‡ Every pious, eminent and learned Reformer was his friend. It was the power of his reputation, proclaiming abroad their own condemnation, that led the General Assembly of Geneva to adopt a decree for his return; to acknowledge the great injury they had done him and implore forgiveness of almighty God; to send an honorable deputation to him to persuade him to accept their invitation; to go forth in throngs to welcome his return; and to allow him a secretary at the public

* Bayle's *Dictionary*, vol. ii., p. 268, note x.

† *Ibid.*, p. 265, and note ii. ‡ Waterman, p. 135.

expense. In short, it would be no difficult matter, as has been said, to prove that there is not a parallel instance upon record of any single individual being equally and so unequivocally venerated for the union of wisdom and piety, both in England and by a large body of the foreign churches, as John Calvin.

The full extent to which the living influence of Calvin extended is only now being fully demonstrated. "A few days before he expired, in 1564, Calvin was in his library with Theodore de Beza, and, showing him the immense correspondence he had kept up for above a quarter of a century with the most evangelical Christians and the highest personages of Europe, proposed to him to publish it for the Church's instruction. This wish of the dying Reformer was but tardily and partially accomplished in the sixteenth century; but a literary man and a Christian of our days, M. Jules Bonnet, Docteur ès Lettres, has undertaken, after the lapse of three hundred years, to fulfill Calvin's wish; and five years spent in traveling in Switzerland, in France and in Germany, with careful studies and researches in the libraries of these different countries, have enabled him to form a collection which will throw a fresh light on the history of

the Reformation. This correspondence, which terminates only on Calvin's deathbed, embraces every period of his life, and contains, at the same time, the familiar effusions of friendship, grave theological statements and elevated views of the politics of Protestantism. We see in it the Reformer reproving with all respect and dignity the queen of Navarre, Marguerite de Valois, sister of Francis I.; exhorting the young king of England, Edward VI., as a Christian Mentor speaking to his Telemachus; conversing with Melanchthon, Bullinger, Knox, Condé, Coligny, the duchess of Ferrara, daughter of Louis XII., Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henry IV.; we see him withstanding Libertines, strengthening martyrs, upholding all the churches.

"This important publication appears to be* a remarkable event in the history of the Church and of theology. As documents, these letters will compel the odious calumnies which have been circulated to yield to the impartial witness of truth. We shall learn from Calvin's own mouth what his thoughts, wishes and pursuits were, and we shall find in his most familiar writings the secret of the revolution of which he was, in this world, the instrument. Certainly, Luther is the *first* Reform-

*Says D'Aubigné.

er; but if Luther laid the foundation, Calvin built thereon. If, on the one hand, we consider the Lutheran Reformation imperfect in some respects, and, on the other, the Calvinistic imperfect also, I agree to it, but powerful, more complete, better organized and full of action. If we compare the Lutheran nations of Germany, rich in intelligence, in missionary zeal, but who are still far from understanding and practicing some questions, in particular that of religious liberty, with the nations which have passed chiefly under Calvin's influence —Holland, Scotland, England, the United States, these free people, some of whom stretch their sceptres over all seas and to the very extremities of the world—it is impossible not to perceive that Luther and Calvin are the greatest men of modern times, the most eminent Christians since St. Paul; at least, if we consider their influence on the human mind. How, then, could we fail to study the familiar letters of Calvin, that most powerful instrument in the hands of the Lord?"

This correspondence has already attracted the attention of eminent men. In particular, the Paris *Journal des Débats* has devoted an interesting article to the subject, from which we quote the following lines:

"Let us bring before our minds the state of excitement in which the ardent disciple of the Reformation (Calvin) must have lived when from Paris, from Lyons, from Chambéry, he received tidings of the tortures endured by his coreligionists. History has not sufficiently dwelt upon the atrocity of these persecutions, nor on the resignation, the courage, the serenity, of the sufferers. There are there pages worthy of the early ages of the Church; and I do not doubt that a simple history, composed from the documents and the correspondence of the times, of these sublime struggles would equal in beauty the ancient martyrology. Calvin's voice in these moments of trial attains a fullness and an elevation truly marvelous. His letters to the martyrs of Lyons, of Chambéry, to the prisoners of Chatelet, appear an echo from the heroic days of Christianity—pages from the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian. I confess that before I was introduced by M. Bonnet to this sanguinary scene of martyrdom I had neither understood the nobleness of the victims nor the cruelty of their executioners."

CHAPTER V.

CALVIN VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF ILLIBERALITY, INTOLERANCE AND PERSECUTION.

BUT we will pass on to another view of Calvin's character. A truly great mind, conscious of its own resources and more fully sensible than others of the difficulties surrounding every subject of human speculation, is always calm and tempered with moderation, equally free from bigotry and indifference. It has therefore been attempted to deprive Calvin of his glory by the allegation that he was illiberal, extravagant and intolerant, a furious bigot and an extreme ultraist, and the most heartless of persecutors. Such charges, in such an age and country as this, are, it is well known, the most offensive, and the most sure to cover with obloquy the man and the cause with which they are identified. But the very reverse we affirm to be the truth in this case. Calvin was liberal in his views, moderate in his spirit and tolerant in his disposition.

Who had endured greater calumny, reproach and hatred at the hands of the Romanists than Calvin? and yet he allowed the validity of Romish baptism and the claims of Rome to the character of a Church, not merely as comprising many of God's elect children, but as having "the remains of a Church continuing with them."* Against whom did Luther and his coadjutors utter severer language than against Calvin in reference to the sacramentarian controversy? And whom did Calvin more delight to honor than Luther? How did he study to cover the coals of this pernicious discord, and, if possible, entirely to quench them! "I wish you," he says, writing to Bullinger and the other pastors of Zurich, against whom Luther had used an inexcusable wantonness of language, reproach and anathema—"I wish you to recall these things to your mind, how great a man Luther is, and with how great gifts he excels; also with what fortitude and constancy of mind, with what efficacy of learning, he hath hitherto labored and watched to destroy the kingdom of Antichrist, and to propagate, at the same time, the doctrine of salvation.

*"However broken and deformed it may be, a Church of some sort exists," and, in proof of this, he quotes 2 Thess. ii. 4. See his letters to Socinus in 1549, and Scott, 400.

I often say, If he should call me a devil, I hold him in such honor that I would acknowledge him an eminent servant of God." And does not the whole Protestant world now, including the Lutheran Church itself, acknowledge that the doctrine of Calvin on the Lord's Supper is true, scriptural and catholic, and that Luther's was as certainly extravagant and wrong?

In how many ways did he endeavor to preserve the peace and harmony of the churches; to lead to compromise on matters of order and discipline; to encourage submission to ceremonies and forms which were in themselves "fooleries" rather than produce rupture and give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme; to prevent schism, disunion and alienation; and to bind together with the cords of love the whole brotherhood of the Reformed churches! "Keep your smaller differences," says he, addressing the Lutheran churches; "let us have no discord on that account, but let us march in one solid column under the banners of the Captain of our salvation, and with undivided counsels pour the legions of the cross upon the territories of darkness and of death." "I should not hesitate to cross ten seas if by this means holy communion might prevail among the members of Christ."

Nothing can be more liberal than his views as to the character of other churches. "Let the ministers, therefore," he says,* "by whom God permits the Church to be governed, be what they may; if the signs of the true Church are perceived, it will be better not to separate from their communion. Nor is it an objection that some impure doctrines are there delivered, for there is scarce any Church which retains none of the remains of ignorance. It is sufficient for us that the doctrine on which the Church of Christ is founded should hold its place and influence." Hence has it happened that the most absurd attempts have been made, even in our own day, to represent Calvin as the friend and defender of prelacy, which he spent his life in opposing, that liberality which made him willing to bear for a time with the "tolerable fooleries" of the ritual of the English Church being most ungenerously interpreted into a warm and hearty approval of its unscriptural forms, which Calvin as openly and constantly condemned.†

*Letter to Farel from Strasburg, 1538, in Waterman, pp. 249, 250.

†See Calvin's views on the subject of episcopacy fully vindicated and established by Dr. Miller in his recent letters to Bishop Ives, and also in his work on *The Christian Ministry*, second edition, octavo.

Equally liberal and moderate was Calvin in his doctrinal tenets. He steered the safe and middle course between Antinomianism and Arminianism, and between fatalism and latitudinarianism. No one has ever been more belied. Garbled extracts have been made to give expression to views which their very context was designed to overthrow. Doctrines have been fathered upon Calvin which had existed in the Church from the apostles' days and in every age, and erroneous opinions, both doctrinal and practical, have been attributed to him which he spent his life in opposing, and of which no confutation could be found more triumphant than what is given in his own works. But, while these are unknown or unread, youthful bigots and learned fools expose their shame by retailing and perpetuating stereotyped abuse. It were enough to repel all such criminations by the fact that for every doctrine Calvin appeals to the Bible, that he exalts the Bible above all human authority, including his own, that he claims for all men liberty of conscience and of judgment, and that he charges all men to search the Scriptures, and thus to try his doctrines whether they be of God.

And, as this charge is based by many upon the

doctrines of predestination, decrees and divine sovereignty, let it be remembered that these were not peculiar to Calvin, but were common to him with the greatest divines of all ages and with all the Reformers. He was, too, a sub- and not a supralapsarian, teaching that God's decrees had reference to man's foreseen condition and necessities and were not the causes of them. He does not represent God as arbitrary. He utterly repudiates and constantly opposes fatalism.* He always inculcates the duty and necessity of using means, condemning the confounding of "necessity with compulsion," and rejecting the supposition as absurd that "man's being actuated by God is incompatible with his being at the same time active himself."† He teaches that the means of grace, such as exhortations, precepts and reproofs, are not confined to those who are already pious, but are God's means of awakening the careless, converting the sinner and leaving the impenitent without excuse. He teaches, therefore, that sinners are constantly to be urged to attendance upon God's ordinances and to the diligent and prayerful use of all the means by which they may be convinced,

* *Institutes*, b. i., ch. xvi., §§ 8, 9.

† *Ibid.*, b. ii., ch. iii., § 5, and b. i., ch. xviii., § 2.

converted and saved.* He strenuously upholds the free agency and responsibility of man.† He rejects the doctrine of reprobation as it is vulgarly believed, since he attributes the final condemnation of the wicked to themselves, and not to any arbitrary decree of God.‡

While Calvin held firmly to the great funda-

* *Instit.*, b. ii., ch. v., §§ 1, 4, 5, etc.

† See numerous extracts in proof in Scott's *Continuation of Milner*, vol. ii., pp. 379, 385, 405, 508, 521, 525.

‡ *Instit.*, b. iii., ch. xxiv., is entitled "Election Confirmed" (*i. e.*, made surely known to us, Scott, *ibid.*, p. 577) "by the divine calling, the just destruction to which the reprobate are destined, *procured by themselves.*" In the epistle of the pastors of Geneva ("Calv. Epist." pp. 63–65, in Scott, 406) we find reprobation most offensively spoken of as proceeding "from the bare will and pleasure of God"—*nudo Dei placito*—when no such thing as we should understand by the words is meant. This appears from what presently follows: "It is beyond controversy that the perdition of men is to be ascribed to their own wickedness," and that the punishments which God inflicts on them are "deserved." It would seem that all which they mean, and which Calvin, generally at least, means, by such obnoxious language, is that among a *fallen and guilty* race God, according to his sovereign pleasure, chooses whom he will to bring to salvation, and whom (according to the title of Calvin's work on predestination) he will "leave in their ruin." This appears to be the constant meaning of Calvin in the work which he now published on these subjects.

mental doctrine of imputation and to the doctrine of a limited atonement, he nevertheless rejected all such views of the sacrifice of Christ as would make him to have suffered just so much for each one that was to be saved by him; so that if more or fewer had been appointed unto salvation, he must have shed accordingly more or fewer drops of his precious blood and suffered more or less severe dying pangs. Calvin, on the contrary, recognized in the death of Christ a sacrifice adequate to the sins of the whole world, and one which made provision for all whom it should please the Father to enable and dispose to avail themselves of it.*

* On Rom. v. 18—"The free gift came on all men to justification of life"—he remarks: "The apostle makes it a grace or favor common to all, because it is proposed (or set forth) to all, not because it is actually extended to (conferred on) all. For, though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered by the mercy of God to all indifferently (without exception or distinction), yet all do not embrace him." On 1 John ii. 2 he says: "Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficaciously only for the elect." And finally, as early as the year 1535, in a preface to the New Testament in French, he says: "At the appointed time the Messiah came and amply performed whatever was necessary for the redemption of all. The benefit was not confined to Israel alone: it was rather to be extended to the whole human race, because by Christ alone the whole human race was to be reconciled to God."

He therefore fully and frequently proclaims the universality of the gospel promises and the duty of all to receive and embrace them.* While he teaches that original sin is natural, he denies that it originated from nature. "We deny," says he, "that it proceeded from nature to signify that it is rather an adventitious quality or accident than a substantial property, originally innate, yet we call it natural that no one may suppose it to be contracted by every individual from corrupt habit, whereas it prevails over all by hereditary right." "No other explanation, therefore, can be given of our being said to be dead in Adam than that his transgression not only procured misery and ruin for himself, but also precipitated our nature into similar destruction, and that not by his personal guilt as an individual, which pertains not to us, but because he infected all his descendants with the corruption into which he had fallen." And again: "We are, on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted and justly condemned in the sight of God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence and purity. And this liability to punishment arises not from the delinquency of another—for

* *Instit.*, b. iii., ch. iii., § 21, ch. xxii., § 10, and ch. xxiv., §§ 6, 8, 16, 17, and Scott, p. 597.

when it is said that the sin of Adam renders us obnoxious to the divine judgment it is not to be understood as if we, though innocent, were undeservedly loaded with the guilt of his sin—but because we are all subject to a curse in consequence of his transgression he is therefore said to have involved us in guilt. Nevertheless, we derive from him not only the punishment, but also the pollution, to which the punishment is justly due." *

He allows that even as fallen "the soul of man is irradiated with a beam of divine light; so that it is never wholly destitute of some little flame, or at least a spark of it," though "it cannot comprehend God by that illumination," the remaining image of God being but the ruin of the original, and "confused, mutilated and defiled." †

His doctrines, therefore, as he frequently shows, cut up by the roots all presumption, prevent despair, encourage hope and in an eminent degree enforce and cherish holiness of both heart and life.‡ His doctrines also make special provision for the salvation of all elect children, whether baptized or

* *Instit.*, b. ii., ch. i., §§ 10, 11, and b. ii., ch. i., §§ 6, 8.

† *Ibid.*, b. i., ch. xv., §§ 4, 6, b. ii., ch. ii., § 12, b. ii., ch. i., §§ 13, 19, 22, 24, and ch. iii., § 4.

‡ *Ibid.*, b. iii., ch. xxiv., § 4, and ch. xiv., §§ 17–21.

unbaptized, whether Christian or pagan; nor did he ever discountenance the idea that all children dying in infancy may be regarded as among the elect, and therefore as assuredly saved.* He also approved the baptism of the infants of all baptized parents, whether communicants or not, recognizing the covenant right of such children to the seal of those privileges to which they have a natural and necessary claim.

I may also mention, as interesting at this time, that Calvin approved of a public form for the introduction of professors into the Christian Church.†

Now, let these views of Calvin be compared

* In his *Instit.* (b. iv., ch. xvi.), where he argues against those who affirmed that regeneration cannot take place in early infancy, "God," says he, "adopts infants and washes them in the blood of his Son," and "they are regarded by Christ as among his flock." Again (*Instit.*, b. iv., ch. xvi., § 31, p. 461; see also pp. 435, 436, 451), he says of John iii. 36: "Christ is not speaking of the general guilt in which all the descendants of Adam are involved, but only threatening the despisers of the gospel who proudly and obstinately reject the grace that is offered them; and this has nothing to do with infants. I likewise oppose a contrary argument: all those whom Christ blesses are exempted from the curse of Adam and the wrath of God; and it is known that infants were blessed by him: it follows that they are exempted from death."

† *Instit.*, b. iv., ch. xix., §§ 4, 13.

with those of Luther and Melanchthon on the subject of predestination, or with those of Beza, his own coadjutor, or with those of the English Reformers and the Lambeth Articles, and will they not be allowed, by every one who passes upon them an impartial judgment, to be at once liberal, moderate and wise?

While these doctrines, by which alone many know Calvin, were not peculiar to him, it is also true that they were not dwelt upon by him in his writings with any undue prominence, but were kept in subordination to other subjects.* And when the unparalleled consistency with which, through his whole life, Calvin continued to maintain the same views is contrasted with the variation of others, how illustriously do they exhibit the superiority of his intellectual powers! Not that he was infallible: far from it. He too was human, fallible, liable to make mistakes, and chargeable with error. In making assurance of salvation necessary to a true faith, in questioning the peculiar and permanent sanctity of the Sabbath day, in supposing that Christ descended to hell or endured on the cross the tor-

* "If you read the letters of Calvin, you will find very little about predestination and very much about all the other doctrines of Christianity."

ments of hell, Calvin certainly erred, and is not by any to be believed or followed.*

But we proceed to remark that Calvin was not intolerant in spirit or in practice. It is true that Servetus was at his prosecution brought to trial for conduct the most criminal and opinions the most horrible, which in the face of the laws and of repeated admonition he continued to propagate with pestiferous zeal. But that Calvin did more than this, in the whole course of his life, to give occasion to the charges of persecuting intolerance so loudly proclaimed against him we positively deny. To affirm, as many do, that he sought the burning of Servetus, that he influenced the senate in securing his death, that he aided or abetted in his execution, or that he did not use his best endeavors to procure a mitigation of his sentence, is an atrocious calumny against the truth of history and an act of black persecution against the memory of a great and good man.

We have already offered proof of the liberality and moderation of Calvin even toward opponents. Many similar facts illustrative of his great for-

* See Scott's *Continuation of Milner*, vol. iii., pp. 545, 550 and 583, and *Biblical Repertory*, 1831, p. 421.

bearance might be adduced. His benevolence no one can dispute, nor can any one question his humble and unambitious spirit. The earlier editions of his *Institutes* contained also the following eloquent argument in favor of toleration: "Though it may be wrong to form friendship or intimacy with those who hold pernicious opinions, yet must we contend against them only by exhortation, by kindly instructions, by clemency, by mildness, by prayers to God, that they may be so changed as to bear good fruits and be restored to the unity of the Church. And not only are erring Christians to be so treated, but even Turks and Saracens." *

This, then, was the natural spirit and the genuine creed of Calvin. But it was diametrically opposed to the spirit and to the universal sentiment of the age. The Romish Church had diffused the notion that the spirit of the judicial laws of the Old Testament still constituted the rule and standard of the Christian Church. Of necessity, therefore, a regard for the public peace and the preservation of the Church of Christ from infection required the punishment of heretics and blasphemers.† Toleration of errorists was deemed sin-

* Dr. Taylor's *Biography of the Age of Elizabeth*, vol. ii., p. 46.

† See Clarke's *History of Intolerance*, vol. i., pp. xviii., xxi.

ful, and their destruction a Christian duty. Men were taught to believe that temporal penalties were God's appointed means for making men virtuous and religious. The gibbet, the stake, the cell, and various other modes of torture, were therefore the chief arguments employed. Priests became inquisitors. The pulpit was the inciter to slaughter, and Te Deums resounded through cloistered walls in commemoration of the deaths of infamous heretics. Persecution, in short, was the avowed policy of both the Church and the State for the suppression of dangerous opinions. Now, the Reformers, be it remembered, were all Romish theologians, trained up in the bosom of the Roman Church and imbued with these fatal sentiments, which were everywhere applauded.*

The liberty of the Reformation, also, had been abused to the greatest licentiousness both of opinion and of practice. Such heresies in doctrine and excesses in conduct were all employed as arguments against the Reformation. While, then, tolerance of error was a standing reproach in the mouth of Rome against their cause, the Reformers, deluded in their first principles, blinded by the universal opinion of all parties, and driven, in self-defence,

* Viller *On the Reformation*, p. 260.

to oppose themselves to all heresy, continued to approve and to act upon those views which are now condemned as intolerant and persecuting. Calvin, therefore, was led to think that his previous views would encourage heresy and injure the cause of the Reform; and for once he allowed his better judgment to be warped, and fully endorsed the principle that heresy must be restrained by force. But still he utterly disclaimed all right or power on the part of the Church to employ that force. He transferred it altogether to the civil authorities—that is, to the hands of the community generally, by whom it has been ultimately abolished. Tried, therefore, by the universal judgment of his age, Calvin was not intolerant; and when condemned by the free and liberal views of the present time he meets his sentence in common with all men, whether civilians or theologians, and with all the Reformers, whether continental or Anglican.* So that the whole guilt of the persecuting tenets of the Reformers must ultimately rest upon that mother from whose breasts these all had drawn the milk of intolerance, and

* Scott's *Continuation*, vol. iii., pp. 420, 432, 433, 435, 437, 438; D'Aubigné, *History of Reformation*, vol. iii., p. 630; Beza's *Life*, pp. 109, 110, 156, 197.

by whose nurture they had been trained up in the way of persecution. The Romish Church, therefore, as has been truly said, is answerable for the execution of Servetus.*

If, however, there ever was a case in which the execution of the penalty of death could have been

*"To appreciate," says D'Aubigné, "the Reformer's sentiments as regards heresy, we must do something similar to what is done when we wish to appreciate the strength of a river: we must separate it into two forces. We must thus separate Calvin's feeling against heresy. One force was excellent: it belonged to Calvin; the other is deplorable: it belongs to the age he lived in. The part that belongs to Calvin is the horror he feels for false doctrines which attack the glory of God in Jesus Christ. Would to God we felt more of this horror for all that is false and evil! But to the sixteenth century belongs the idea that the faults committed against the *first* table of the law, or against *God*, ought to be punished by human tribunals, and by such a punishment as would be inflicted for faults committed against the *second* table, or against *man*. This was a Judaizing error; the sixteenth century had not yet understood that all that belongs to the theocracy of the Old Testament cannot be applied to the Christian Church. Calvin, in this respect, was a man of his age; Melanchthon was also. It is sad, but can we be surprised at it? A longer period of time and greater discernment are required to perceive these errors than those which assault our faith in a more direct manner. I know almost only Luther who on this point" (religious liberty) "was in advance of his age."

properly inflicted, it was in that of Servetus. Never had man so blasphemed his Maker, so outraged Christian feeling and all propriety, so insulted the laws in force for his destruction, and so provoked the slumbering arm of vengeance to fall upon him.*

Servetus had been driven from every attempted residence on account of his unbearable conduct. He had been tried and condemned to be burned to death by the Romanists at Vienna, from whose hands he had just escaped when he came to Geneva.† He was well aware of the intolerant character of the laws of the city of Geneva enacted against heretics by the emperor Frederick I. when under imperial and Romish jurisdiction, which had been often exercised before that time, and which were still in force.‡ Calvin, regarding his sentiments and conduct with just abhorrence, and believing it to be his duty, for the reasons stated, to oppose them, gave him previous notice that if he came to the city of Geneva he should be under the necessity of prosecuting him. There was there-

* Beza's *Life*, pp. 163, 203, Philadelphia edition.

† Scott, 423; Beza, *ibid.*, 163.

‡ Scott, pp. 347, 356, 374, 430, 443; Beza, *ibid.*, pp. 167 180, 199.

fore no previous malice in Calvin toward him. When Servetus had come and Calvin had brought his character and opinions to the views of the authorities, his interference in the matter there ceased. He never visited the court except when required to do so. The senate, instead of being influenced by him in the course they pursued, were, the greater part of them, at that very time opposed to him.* The whole matter also, *before* sentence had been passed, was at Servetus' request submitted to the judgment of the other cities, who unanimously approved of his condemnation.†

It was the sentiment of the age that those who obstinately persisted in heresy and blasphemy were worthy of death. Even the gentle Melanchthon affirms in a letter to Calvin that the magistrates "acted rightly in putting this blasphemer to death;" and in a letter to Bullinger the same mild and cautious and truly Christian man declares, "I *have been surprised* that there are men who blame this severity."

Servetus himself maintained this principle in his *Restitution of Christianity*, the very work which led to his trial and condemnation. The justice

*Scott, pp. 434, 440; Beza's *Life*, 168, 283.

†Scott, 427, 436; Beza's *Life*, 169, 195.

of such a punishment toward himself Servetus repeatedly avowed, if guilty of the charges against him. And this punishment Servetus continually demanded to be inflicted on Calvin, on the ground that by the laws of the state it was required that the person who lodged an accusation against any one should sustain it and make it good, or, failing to do this, should suffer the punishment which would have been due to the accused. This punishment Servetus was led to believe he would be able to inflict on Calvin, since in the council of two hundred, before whom the case was first argued, the opponents and determined enemies of Calvin, the Libertines, predominated.

There is, however, no probability that Servetus, under the circumstances, would have been visited, *merely* for his opinions, with the punishment he suffered.

For what, then, it has been asked, was he condemned? Not for heretical opinions of any sort merely or chiefly, we reply. His opinions and doctrines were doubtless heretical enough according to the standards of judgment at the time; heretical they would in any age be pronounced by the great body of the Christian Church. But it was not so much his opinions in themselves as

the manner in which he stated and defended them which gave offence. The elder Socinus was teaching substantially the same doctrines at Zurich without molestation. But, not content with simply maintaining and defending calmly but earnestly what he thought to be truth, Servetus, it seems, had from the first set himself to assail with terms of bitterest obloquy and reproach—nay, with ribaldry and unmeasured abuse—the opinions of those who differed from him. He made use of language which could not fail to shock the minds of all sober and pious men who held the doctrines of either the Catholic or the Protestant Church. He calls Persons of the Godhead delusions of the devil, and the triune God a monster, a three-headed Cerberus.

It was this bitterness and intolerance of spirit, this entire want of reverence for the most sacred things, this deliberate insult and outrage of the religious feelings of the entire Christian world, that armed the entire Christian world against him and made him a marked and outlawed man long before he ever saw Calvin or Geneva. Some thirteen years before his trial he sent back to Calvin, with whom he was then corresponding, a copy of his *Institutes* with the most severe and bitter reflec-

tions and taunts upon the margin, and sent him several letters of the most abusive and insulting character.

The same spirit was exhibited on his trial. He manifested neither respect for his judges nor a decent regard for the religious sentiment of the age. In the most insulting manner he heaped upon Calvin the most undeserved reproaches and the most abusive epithets, dealing so much in personalities and invectives as to shame even his judges and wear out the patience of men many of whom were inclined to look favorably upon his cause. So far was this abuse carried that, unable to bear it longer, the entire body of the clergy, with Calvin at their head, arose on one occasion and left the tribunal, thus closing the examination.

On his final trial thirty-eight propositions taken from his last work were handed him. His answer, says a dispassionate historian, "was more like the ravings of a maniac than the words of reason and truth. He exhibited a surprising indifference in regard to the erroneous doctrines which were imputed to him, and sought mainly for hard epithets to apply to Calvin. He accused him . . . of being a murderer and a disciple of Simon Magus. The margin of the paper containing the proposi-

tions was covered with such expressions as the following: 'Thou dreamest,' 'Thou liest,' 'Thou canst not deny that thou art Simon the sorcerer.'"

Another historian says of this reply of Servetus, "It is no presumption to say that in point of abuse and scurrility this defence stands unrivaled by any one that was ever made by any defendant, however infatuated, in the most desperate cause."

It was not, then, so much his opinions and dogmas as the manner in which he maintained them that occasioned the final decision of the judges and the almost unanimous verdict of the Christian world against Servetus. "If Servetus had only attacked the doctrine of the Trinity by arguments," says an able writer, "he would have been answered by arguments, and without danger of persecution by the Protestants he might have gone on defending it until called to answer for his belief by Him whose character he had impugned. Argument was not that which Calvin and his contemporaries opposed by the civil tribunal. It was insult and ribaldry, and that too against the Most High, whose character they would defend in the midst of a perverse and rebellious generation." "If ever a poor fanatic thrust himself into the fire," says J. T. Coleridge, "it was Michael Servetus."

What, then, on the whole, was Calvin's agency in this affair? Simply this: he brought an accusation against Servetus when to have done otherwise would have been a virtual betrayal of the cause of the Protestant Reformation, as well as a disregard of the laws of his country.

The position of Calvin was such that under the circumstances he could hardly do otherwise. He stood at the head of the Protestant clergy, not of Geneva alone, but of Europe and of the age. The reproach of heresy was resting, in the estimation of the Catholic world, upon the entire Protestant body, and especially upon Calvin and the clergy of Geneva. They were regarded as Antitrinitarians, and Geneva as a receptacle of heretics. Servetus was known and acknowledged to be a teacher of the most dangerous errors, and in the common estimate of both Catholic and Protestant was a man worthy of death. If the clergy of Geneva, the leaders of the Reformation, failed to proceed according to the laws against such a man thus throwing himself into the midst of them, what could they expect but that the opprobrium of heresy would justly fasten itself upon them in the general opinion of men? It was, in fact, a matter of self-defence with them to show the world, both Catholic and Protestant,

that they had no sympathy with men who undertook the work of reform in the spirit and with the principles of Servetus. It was due to themselves, due to the cause of Protestantism, due to the state under whose laws they dwelt.

As by law required, he substantiated the charge he had made. This he did—this, and nothing more. With the condemnation and sentence of Servetus he had nothing whatever to do. The trial was before a civil tribunal, the highest and most august in the state. Every opportunity of defence was afforded the accused. Calvin himself furnished him the books he needed. The trial was conducted with extreme patience and deliberation. The case was finally submitted to the churches of Switzerland for their decision. With one voice they declared the accused guilty. In the mean time the king of France energetically demanded his death as a condemned heretic who had escaped from his dominions. On political grounds, therefore, and these alone, his condemnation was at last given. His punishment is decided by the united councils after a deliberation of three days; and, so far from triumphing in its severity, Calvin, at the head of the clergy, petitions, but in vain, for its mitigation.

We do not defend in all this the condemnation and death of Servetus. It was a great mistake; call it, if you will, a crime. But let the blame rest *where it belongs*—not on John Calvin, but on the men who decreed that death, and on the age which sanctioned and demanded it.

And when it is remembered that at this very time the flames were consuming the victims of Romish persecution, and also those condemned by Cranmer, who is called a pattern of humility; that Davides fell a victim to the intolerance of Socinus;* that the English Reformers applauded the execution of Servetus; that his punishment was regarded as the common cause of all the churches in Christendom; and that for fifty years thereafter no writer criminated Calvin for his agency in this matter,—may we not say to those who now try Calvin by an *ex post facto* law, by a public opinion which is the result of the very doctrines he promulgated, Let him that is guiltless among you cast the first stone? In thus singling out Calvin as the object of your fierce resentment you manifest the very spirit that you condemn. So much for the charge of intolerance.†

* Scott, 439; Williams, *Religious Liberty*, p. 135.

† See further remarks in Chapter X.

CHAPTER VI.

CALVIN VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF A WANT OF NATURAL AFFECTION AND FRIENDSHIP.

EQUALLY futile and untrue is another charge made against Calvin—that he was entirely destitute of tenderness and all natural affection, and that no expression of kindness can be found in his writings. That his intellectual powers were pre-eminent and held his passions, appetites and desires in complete subjection to the dictates of prudence and calm sobriety is unquestionably true. But that Calvin possessed deep feeling and was susceptible of the strongest and most tender emotions we believe to be incontrovertibly certain. "I had intended," he says on his return to the people of Geneva, who had so cruelly treated him, "to address the people, entering into a review of the past and a justification of myself and my colleagues; but I found them so touched with remorse, so ready to anticipate me in the confession of their

faults, that I felt that such a proceeding would not only be superfluous, but cruel." "It was beautiful," says Beza, "to observe the union of these three great men—*i. e.*, Calvin, Farel and Viret—in the service of their common Master." When Farel wished to visit him in his last illness, Calvin wrote him, saying, "Farewell, my best and most worthy brother. Since God has determined that you should survive me in this world, live mindful of our union, which has been so useful to the Church of God, and the fruits of which await us in heaven. Do not fatigue yourself on my account. I draw my breath with difficulty, and am expecting continually that my breath will fail. It is sufficient that I live and die in Christ, who is gain to his servants in life and in death. Again, farewell with the brethren."

After the death of his friend Courault he says in a letter to Farel: "I am so overwhelmed that I put no limits to my sorrow. My daily occupations have no power to retain my mind from recurring to the event and revolving constantly the oppressive thought. The distressing impulses of the day are followed by the more torturing anguish of the night. I am not only troubled with dreams, to which I am inured by habit, but I am greatly en-

feebled by the restless watchings which are extremely injurious to my health."

On the death of Bucer he thus writes: "I feel my heart to be almost torn asunder when I reflect on the very great loss which the Church has sustained in the death of Bucer, and on the advantages that England would have derived from his labors, had he been spared to assist in carrying on the Reformation in that kingdom."

Look, also, at his letters of consolation, addressed to those confessors for the truth who had been unable to make their escape from persecution.*

On the death of his son he wrote to Viret, saying, "The Lord has certainly inflicted a heavy and severe wound on us by the death of our little son; but He is our father and knows what is expedient for his children." And when his wife was taken from him we behold in Calvin all the tenderness of a most sensitive and affectionate heart. Writing to Farel, to whom he gives a detail of her illness, he says: "The report of the death of my wife has doubtless reached you before this. I use every exertion in my power not to be entirely overcome with heaviness of heart. My friends

*Scott's *Continuation of Milner*, p. 374.

who are about me omit nothing that can afford alleviation to the depression of my mind." Again: "May the Lord Jesus strengthen you by his Spirit and me also in this so great calamity, which would inevitably have overpowered me unless from heaven he stretched forth his hand, whose office it is to raise the fallen, to strengthen the weak and to refresh the weary." Again, writing to Viret, he says: "Although the death of my wife is a very severe affliction, yet I repress as much as I am able the sorrow of my heart. My friends also afford every anxious assistance, yet, with all our exertions, we effect less in assuaging my grief than I could wish; but still the consolation which I obtain I cannot express. You know the tenderness of my mind, or rather with what effeminacy I yield under trials; so that without the exercise of much moderation I could not have supported the pressure of my sorrow. Certainly it is no common occasion of grief. I am deprived of a most amiable partner, who, whatever might have occurred of extreme endurance, would have been my willing companion not only in exile and poverty, but even in death. While she lived she was indeed the faithful helper of my ministry, and on no occasion did I ever experience from her any

interruption. For your friendly consolation I return you my sincere thanks. Farewell, my dear and faithful brother. May the Lord Jesus watch over and direct you and your wife! To her and the brethren express my best salutation."

Now, if these proofs of the tenderness of Calvin are not sufficient, let any one read the account of his closing scenes, and he will find the most touching manifestations of an affectionate and tender spirit. As a brother, friend, husband, father and minister Calvin displayed warm, steady and unshaken friendship and regard.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH WE OWE TO CALVIN AS AMERICAN CITIZENS AND CHRISTIANS, ILLUSTRATED.

SUCH was Calvin, and such the triumphant defence of his character against all assaults, which he has left behind him in his unspotted life, his unimpeachable character, his familiar epistles and his everlasting works. His wisdom, learning, prudence and unapproachable excellences as an author no one has ever dared to dispute. The star of his fame has continued to shine with ever-increasing brilliancy in the intellectual firmament, and still guides many a voyager over the dark and uncertain sea of time to the sure haven of everlasting blessedness. Such is the rich inheritance he left us who would desire to be followers of him as far as he followed Christ. But this is not all: to him we are indebted for other treasures dearly prized by every American citizen.

We look, for instance, to our system of common schools as the great hope of American freedom in

the intelligence they everywhere diffuse. Now, Calvin was the father of popular education and the inventor of the system of free schools. None of the Reformers perceived more clearly the advantages of education or labored more earnestly to promote it.

Next to our common schools, we prize our colleges and theological seminaries as the nurseries of citizens, statesmen and ministers capable of guarding the affairs of a great and free people. Now, the building and complete endowment of the college and seminary at Geneva were among the last acts accomplished by Calvin, it having been opened in 1559 with six hundred students. "Even now, when Geneva has generally deserted the standards of the original Reformers and joined those of Arius and Socinus, her sons rejoice in the great triumph achieved by the wisdom of Calvin over the power of Napoleon, who on conquering Geneva wanted courage to make any change in the system of education, which had been planted more than two hundred years before Bonaparte was born, by this distinguished friend of genuine Christianity and a truly scriptural education."

We hail the birthday of our country's liberty. We still commemorate the declaration of our na-

tional independence. We glory in a country more rapidly extending its territory, its population and its riches than any other upon earth, in laws the most just and impartial, in a government the most equitable, economical and free, and in the enjoyment of a religious liberty more perfect and complete than can be paralleled in the history of man. The star-spangled banner awakens the envy and the admiration of the world, and our glorious republic is the fairy vision which excites the emulous desire of imitation in the bosom of every well-wisher to the advancement of society. But whence came all these? "The pilgrims of Plymouth," says Bancroft, "were Calvinists; the best influence in South Carolina came from the Calvinists of France; William Penn was the disciple of the Huguenots; the ships from Holland that first brought colonists to Manhattan were filled with Calvinists. He that will not honor the memory and respect the influence of Calvin knows but little of the origin of American liberty." Yes, Calvin was a thoroughgoing republican. The *Institutes* of Calvin carry with the truths of Christianity the seeds of republicanism to the ends of the earth. "Indeed," says he,* "if

* *Inst.*, b. iv., ch. xx., § 8.

these three forms of government which are stated by philosophers be considered in themselves, I shall by no means deny that either aristocracy or a mixture of aristocracy and democracy far excels all others; and that, indeed, not of itself, but because it very rarely happens that kings regulate themselves so that their will is never at variance with justice and rectitude, or, in the next place, that they are endued with such penetration and prudence as in all cases to discover what is best. The vice or imperfection of men, therefore, renders it safer and more tolerable for the government to be in the hands of many, that they may afford each other mutual assistance and admonition, and that if any one arrogate to himself more than is right the many may act as censors and masters to restrain his ambition. This has always been proved by experience, and the Lord confirmed it by his authority when he established a government of this kind among the people of Israel with a view to preserve them in the most desirable condition till he exhibited in David a type of Christ. And as I readily acknowledge that no kind of government is more happy than this, where liberty is regulated with becoming moderation and properly established on a durable basis, so also I consider these as the

most happy people who are permitted to enjoy such a condition; and if they exert their strenuous and constant efforts for its preservation, I admit that they act in perfect consistence with their duty."

"Calvin," says Bishop Horsley, "was unquestionably, in theory, a republican; he freely declares his opinion that the republican form, or an aristocracy reduced nearly to the level of a republic, was of all the best calculated, in general, to answer the ends of government. So wedded, indeed, was he to this notion that, in disregard of an apostolic institution and the example of the primitive ages, he endeavored to fashion the government of all the Protestant churches upon republican principles; and his persevering zeal in that attempt—though in this country, through the mercy of God, it failed—was followed, upon the whole, with a wide and mischievous success. But in civil politics, though a republican in theory, he was no leveler."

Geneva, the mother of modern republics, is the monument of Calvin's fame, and, as Montesquieu says, should celebrate in annual festival the day when Calvin first entered that city. Politically and ecclesiastically Calvin honored the people,

assumed their intelligence, virtue and worth, and entrusted them with the management of affairs. He taught, also, the spiritual independence of the Church, its entire separation from civil government, and the supreme and exclusive headship of its only Lawgiver and Sovereign, the Lord Jesus Christ. These were the grand truths taught and illustrated by Calvin—truths which drew the lovers of freedom to Geneva, which sent them away burning with the thirst for liberty and republicanism which aroused the slumbering people of Europe, which convulsed France, confederated the states of Holland, revolutionized England, Presbyterianized Scotland, colonized New England and founded this great and growing republic.*

*"He lived in a day when nations were shaken to their centre by the excitement of the Reformation; when the fields of Holland and France were wet with the carnage of persecution; when vindictive monarchs on the one side threatened all Protestants with outlawry and death, and the Vatican on the other sent forth its anathemas and its cry for blood. In that day, it is too true, the influence of an ancient, long-established, hardly-disputed error, the constant danger of his position, the intensest desire to secure union among the antagonists of popery, the engrossing consciousness that this struggle was for the emancipation of the Christian world, induced the great Reformer to defend the use of the sword for the extirpation of error. Reprobating and lamenting his adhesion to the cruel doctrine

This, too, is an age of missions. The missionary enterprise is the glory of the Church, the regenerator of society, the precursor of the millennial reign of peace and happiness, and the hope of the world. With generous emulation, all branches of the Church catholic strive for the mastery in this glorious achievement, while "Ichabod!" is written upon any denomination from whose battlements the gospel-banner is not unfurled and whose laggard troops come not up to the help of the Lord — to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Now, it was Calvin who led on this mighty enterprise and gave birth to this modern crusade against the powers of darkness. He alone, so far as we know, of all the Reformers, while battling with surrounding foes, remembered the waste places of the earth which are full of the habitations of horrid cruelty, and connected his name with the very earliest at-

which all Christendom had for centuries implicitly received, we may as republicans remember that Calvin was not only the founder of a sect, but foremost among the most efficient of modern republican legislators. More truly benevolent to the human race than Solon, more self-denying than Lycurgus, the genius of Calvin infused enduring elements into the institutions of Geneva and made it for the modern world the impregnable fortress of popular liberty, the fertile seed-plot of democracy."—*From an Address to the Public by G. Bancroft, Esq.*

tempt to establish a Protestant mission in the heathen world. He united with the admiral De Coligny in establishing a colony on the coast of Brazil, to which he sent Peter Richter and several others from Geneva, who were accompanied with numerous French Protestants.* Presbytery and missions are therefore coeval, coextensive and inseparable. They went hand in hand during the first six centuries; they again clasped hands in indissoluble union at the era of the Reformation; they have lived together in wedded peace, harmony and zeal; and whom God hath so joined together, let no apathy or unbelief or opinions ever put asunder.

To bequeath to us his spiritual descendants these incomparable blessings, Calvin early sacrificed the glittering crown of academic fame and certain worldly aggrandizement and honor, became an exile from home, kindred and country, endured calumny, reproach, persecution, banishment and poverty, wore out his weak and suffering body with excessive and unremitting toil, and at the early age of fifty-four sunk into the tomb.†

*Scott, pp. 462, 464.

†There is another blessing for which, as Christians, we are indebted to Calvin, and which cannot be too highly estimated: I mean congregational psalmody. Calvin encouraged Marot to

make his metrical version of the psalms. He wrote a preface to them, when first published, in 1543. He took care to have them set to music by the most distinguished musicians. He then introduced them into the public service of the Church. The mode of singing psalms in measured verse was thus first introduced by Calvin at Geneva in 1543. From that church the practice went forth into all the Reformed churches in France, and was introduced into England by the Presbyterians who resided at Geneva and established an English church there during the Marian persecution. The English exiles while at Geneva commenced and completed a translation of the Scriptures into the English language. The principal translators were Miles Coverdale, Christopher Goodman, John Knox, Anthony Gilby, or Gibbs, Thomas Sampson, William Cole and William Whittingham. They divided the chapters into verses and added notes in the margin, and also tables, maps, etc., and published it, with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, in 1560. The psalms, versified and set to music, as in the church of Geneva, were annexed to this Bible. This version has been known as that of Sternhold and Hopkins. The initials of the name of the versifier were prefixed to each psalm. Thus the psalms, versified in English, came into England, and were allowed, first, to be sung before the morning and evening service, and at length they were published with this declaration: "Psalms set forth and allowed to be sung in all churches before and after morning and evening prayer, as also before and after sermons." And in a short time they superseded the Te Deum, Benedicite, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, which had been retained from the Romish Church.—Bayle, art. "Marot;" Neal, p. 109; Heylin, pp. 213, 214; Rees' *Cyclopædia*, art. "Bible;" Burnet, p. 290; Waterman's *Life of Calvin*, p. 403.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLOSING SCENES OF CALVIN'S LIFE.

LET us, then, before we take our leave, draw near and contemplate the last act in the drama of this great and good man's life. Methinks I see that emaciated frame, that sunken cheek and that bright ethereal eye as Calvin lay upon his study-couch. He heeds not the agonies of his frame, his vigorous mind rising in its power as the outward man perished in decay. The nearer he approached his end the more energetically did he ply his unremitted studies. In his severest pains he would raise his eyes to heaven and say, "How long, O Lord?" and then resume his efforts. When urged to allow himself repose he would say, "What! would you that when the Lord comes he should surprise me in idleness?" Some of his most important and labored commentaries were therefore finished during this last year.

On the 10th of March his brother-ministers coming to him, with a kind and cheerful countenance

he warmly thanked them for all their kindness, and hoped to meet them at their regular assembly for the last time, when he thought the Lord would probably take him to himself. On the 27th he caused himself to be carried to the senate-house, and, being supported by his friends, he walked into the hall, when, uncovering his head, he returned thanks for all the kindness they had shown him, especially during his sickness. With a faltering voice he then added, "I think I have entered this house for the last time," and amid flowing tears took his leave. On the 2d of April he was carried to the church, where he received the sacrament at the hands of Beza, joining in the hymn with such an expression of joy in his countenance as attracted the notice of the congregation. Having made his will* on the 27th of this month,

* See in Chapter XI. Speaking of his will, Bayle, the great infidel philosopher, says: "For a man who had acquired so great a reputation and authority to content himself with a hundred crowns a year salary, and after having lived till near fifty-five years of age with the greatest frugality to leave behind him no more than three hundred crowns, his library included, is something so heroical that it must be stupidity itself not to admire it. To conclude, such a will as this of Calvin's, and such a disinterestedness, is a thing so very extraordinary as might make even those who cast their eyes on the philosophers

he sent to inform the syndics and the members of the senate that he desired once more to address them in their hall, whither he wished to be carried the next day. They sent him word that they would wait on him, which they accordingly did the next day, coming to him from the senate-house. After mutual salutations he proceeded to address them very solemnly for some time, and, having prayed for them, shook hands with each of them, who were bathed in tears and parted from him as from a common parent. The following day, April 28th, according to his desire, all the ministers in the jurisdiction of Geneva came to him, whom he also addressed. "I avow," he said, "that I have lived united with you, brethren, in the strictest bonds of true and sincere affection, and I take my leave of you with the same feelings. If you have at any time found me harsh or peevish under my affliction, I entreat your forgiveness." Having shook hands with them, we took leave of him, says Beza, "with sad hearts and by no means with dry eyes."

"The remainder of his days," as Beza informs us, "Calvin passed in almost perpetual prayer.

of ancient Greece say of him, *Non inveni tantum fidem in Israel*—'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.'" See his *Dictionary*, fol. ii., art. "Calvin."

His voice was interrupted by the difficulty of his respiration, but his eyes (which to the last retained their brilliancy), uplifted to heaven, and the expression of his countenance, showed the fervor of his supplications." "His doors," Beza proceeds to say, "must have stood open day and night if all had been admitted who from sentiments of duty and affection wished to see him, but, as he could not speak to them, he requested they would testify their regard by praying for him rather than by troubling themselves about seeing him. Often, also, though he ever showed himself glad to receive me, he intimated a scruple respecting the interruption thus given to my employments—so thrifty was he of time which ought to be spent in the service of the Church."

On the 19th of May, being the day the ministers assembled and when they were accustomed to take a meal together, Calvin requested that they should sup in the hall of his house. Being seated, he was with much difficulty carried into the hall. "I have come, my brethren," said he, "to sit with you for the last time at this table." But before long he said, "I must be carried to my bed," adding, as he looked around upon them with a serene and pleasant countenance,

"These walls will not prevent my union with you in spirit, although my body be absent." He never afterward left his bed. On the 27th of May, about eight o'clock in the evening, the symptoms of dissolution came suddenly on. In the full possession of his reason, he continued to speak, until, without a struggle or a gasp, his lungs ceased to play, and this great luminary of the Reformation set with the setting sun, to rise again in the firmament of heaven. The dark shadows of mourning settled upon the city. It was with the whole people a night of lamentation and tears. All could bewail their loss—the city her best citizen, the Church her renovator and guide, the college her founder, the cause of Reform its ablest champion, and every family a friend and comforter. It was necessary to exclude the crowds of visitors who came to behold his remains lest the occasion might be misrepresented. At two o'clock in the afternoon of Sabbath his body, enclosed in a wooden coffin and followed by the syndics, senators, pastors, professors, together with almost the whole city, weeping as they went, was carried to the common burying-ground without pomp. According to his request, no monument was erected to his memory,

a plain stone without any inscription being all that covered the remains of Calvin.

Such was Calvin in his life and in his death. The place of his burial is unknown, but where is his fame unheard?

As Cato said of the proposed statue for himself, so may it be said of Calvin's monument: "There are so many monuments in this world of ours that it may be much better if people ask, Where is Cato's monument? than to say, There it is." So is it with Calvin. He hath built himself a monument in the hearts and lives of millions more enduring and more glorious than any column of stone or brass.

"What needs great Calvin for his honored bones?—
The labor of an age in pilèd stones?
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid
Under a starry-pointing pyramid?
Dear son of Memory, great heir of Fame,
What needst thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou, in our reverence and astonishment,
Hast built thyself a life-long monument." *

To conclude, we may unite with a late Episco-

* The following are the lines of Beza in reference to Calvin's tomb:

"Why, in this humble and unnoticed tomb,
Is Calvin laid, the dread of falling Rome,

pal reviewer of the character of Calvin in hoping "that the time is not far distant when new Horsleys will be raised up to break in pieces the arrows of calumny, and to make all the followers of the Prince of peace and truth ashamed to join the ranks of the infidels in using the poisoned weapons of shameless detraction for the purpose of vilifying the character of one of the most holy, the most undaunted, the most laborious and the most disinterested followers of a crucified Redeemer." *

Mourned by the good and by the wicked feared,
By all who knew his excellence revered;
From whom ev'n Virtue's self might virtue learn,
And young and old its value may discern?
'Twas Modesty, his constant friend on earth,
That laid this stone, unsculptured with a name.
O happy turf! enriched with Calvin's worth,
More lasting far than marble is thy fame."

* The Rev. Mr. Sibson, A. B., of Trinity College, Dublin, in his translation of Beza's *Life*, pp. 118, 119.

CHAPTER IX.

A SUPPLEMENTARY VINDICATION OF THE ORDINATION OF CALVIN.

IN preparing this vindication of the character and life of Calvin I was not led to notice the question which has been raised by his enemies, the Romanists and Prelatists, whether Calvin was ever ordained. This question did not fall under the general view of Calvin's life and character which it was my object to take. The question had been often met and triumphantly answered, and appeared to me to possess little interest or importance at the present time. Circumstances, however, have changed. The baseless attempts to fasten upon Calvin an approval of diocesan episcopacy having been completely foiled, and the calumnies against his general character having been repelled, his enemies have taken refuge in this forlorn hope, and are now heard on every side exclaiming, "Ah! but Calvin, after all, was never ordained." It is really amusing to see the baby-artifices which suffice these

profound scholars, these inimitable logicians, these exclusive possessors of all grace. "Calvin was never ordained," say our prelatic friends. "Calvin was never ordained," shout the Romanists. "And it is not even attempted to prove this all-important fact," they both proclaim in loudest chorus. We will now, then, meet these same confident boasters and accept their challenge to discuss this question.

And, in the first place, we remark that it is a matter of no practical importance whatever to Presbyterians whether Calvin was or was not ordained. This whole outcry is mere noise, *vox et præterea nihil*, gotten up in order to drown the voice of reason and turn away attention from evident defeat.

Let it, then, be fully understood that the validity of Presbyterian ordination depends IN NO MANNER OR DEGREE upon the ordination of Calvin. He may have been ordained or not ordained, while of our ordination there can be no manner of doubt. Were the validity of our ordinations made to depend upon the personal succession of a line of single ordainers, were Calvin a link in that line, and were our present chain connected with him, then, indeed, there would be some sense and some force in the objections made against Calvin's ordi-

nation. It is on this ground we boldly deny that any valid *prelatical* ordination exists, or can be shown to exist, either in the Romish, the Anglican or the American Episcopal Church. But we hold to no such doctrine. Our ordination depends, not upon one prelate, but upon many presbyters; so that even if invalidity could be shown to attach to any one of the number of presbyters officiating in any given case, it does not affect the whole, and consequently does not injure that ordination which is given by the whole. Did Calvin ever ordain ALONE? Did Calvin ordain *alone* all those from whom our present ordination springs? Preposterous assumption, which all the boldness of reckless malignity has never dared to make.

Suppose, then, that Calvin, while unordained, had united with the Presbytery of Geneva in conferring ordination upon others. Were not the others, Farel and Coraud, ordained, and ordained, too, by Romish prelates? Were not Luther and Zuinglius and many others prelatically ordained? And subtracting, therefore, the invalid co-operation of Calvin from the ceremony, was there not still validity enough to secure a valid result? On the ground of Scripture, of reason and of the theory of Presbyterian ordination, most assuredly there

was. And, whatever our opponents may choose to say of the validity of Presbyterian ordination *generally*, they cannot, without betraying absolute absurdity, affirm that it depends in any degree upon the fact of Calvin's ordination. This whole question, therefore, is merely one of literary curiosity and historical research.

But we proceed a step farther, and affirm that Calvin's character and authority as a minister of Jesus Christ did not depend upon his ordination. Ordination does not confer upon any man either the character or the authority of a minister of Christ. The qualifications which fit any man for this high office can be imparted only by God through Christ and by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit. Without these no man is a fit subject for ordination, which presupposes their existence. The authority to preach the gospel arises also from that commission which Christ has given to all those whom he, as the only Head of the Church, to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given, has qualified for the work. It is a blasphemous assumption in any Church or body of men to claim the power of imparting to others either the qualifications or the authority to preach the gospel. Ordination, therefore, is not in

itself absolutely essential to a true ministry, since without it there may be the qualifications and the authority to use them. Ordination is merely the appointed method whereby any given branch of the Church declares its belief that the individual ordained is qualified and authorized by God to preach the gospel, and whereby it commends him to all those for whom it acts, as worthy of their confidence and entitled to all the respect and consideration due to a minister of Christ. Ordination, therefore, is essential to the *regularity*, but not to the *validity*, of the ministry. And should any church have such unbounded confidence in the qualifications and call of any man for the office as to allow him to minister among them without a special ordination, he would be no less certainly a minister because admitted in an unusual way to the exercise of his gifts and calling. In ordinary circumstances, of course, no such case could occur; we speak hypothetically. But is it true that Calvin was never ordained? Then do our remarks apply in all their strength to him. Who ever doubted his qualifications for the ministry? Not, surely, the ministers and magistrates of Geneva, when they, almost by violence, compelled him to enter upon his duties. Having, then, as the whole Reformed world believe,

the qualifications and call which fitted him for the ministry, Calvin had also the authority of Christ for engaging in its work. And if the churches thought it unnecessary that he should be formally set apart by ordination, Calvin's authority as a minister of Christ is not the less, but even the more, evident, since it was believed by all to be accredited by *extraordinary* gifts and calling.*

But, still farther, we affirm that Calvin was authorized to preach by the Romish Church itself. He received the tonsure at the hands of the Romish prelate, which is the first part of the ceremony of ordination and qualifies for holding benefices and cures. The hair then cut from the crown of the head shows, as is taught by Romanists, that the individual partakes of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ.† In virtue of this office and authority, "it is certain" that John Calvin delivered some sermons at Pont l'Évêque before he left France.‡ He had ordination sufficient, therefore, in the judg-

*See these views fully and literally sustained by the Confession of the French churches, art. xxxi, Quick's *Synodicon*, vol. i., p. xiii., and by many other Reformed bodies and authors as given in Henderson's *Rev. and Consid.*, pp. 252–263.

† See Broughton's *Ecclesiastical Dictionary*, vol ii., p. 468.

‡ Beza's *Life.*

ment of the Romish Church, to warrant his preaching. And since the power this Church professes to give in ordination for the priesthood is idolatrous and blasphemous,* and is not attempted or believed in by the Reformed churches, Calvin received from the Romish Church all that authority which is deemed sufficient for those duties which are recognized by Protestants as proper and peculiar to the ministry.

But we advance still farther in our argument, and assert that it is a matter of the most certain inference that Calvin was ordained in the Reformed Church and by the Presbytery of Geneva.

That a presbytery existed at Geneva before Calvin reached that city is beyond doubt. Beza expressly declares that when Farel by his denunciation overcame the purpose of Calvin to pass by Geneva, "Calvin, affrighted by this terrible denunciation, gave himself up to the will of the presbytery and the magistrates" (*presbyterii et magistratus voluntati*").†

That it was the established and uniform belief of the Reformers that ordination, in the ordinary

* The offering of the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ by transubstantiation.

† Calvin, i., *Opp.*, folio 1.

circumstances of the Church, was necessary and very important, and that their practice was consistent with this belief, is equally certain. Unless this is denied, it is unnecessary to produce the proofs which are at hand.*

Nay, more, it is beyond doubt that this was the judgment not only of all the other Reformers, but also of Calvin himself. He insists in many parts of his *Institutes* (his earliest theological work) upon the importance and necessity of ordination by the imposition of hands.† These sentiments, which Calvin had published just before going to Geneva, he ever after held, as is manifest in all the subsequent editions of this work, and in the Confession of the French churches, which he drew up, and in which ordination is declared to be essential to a regular ministry.

The inference, therefore, is unavoidable that since there was a presbytery at Geneva when Calvin went there, since all the Reformers, and Calvin in particular, insisted on the necessity and scripturality of ordination, and since Calvin is expressly said to have given himself up to the presbytery, he must

* See Seamen's *Vindication of the Judgment of the Reformed Church concerning Ordination*, London, 1647.

† See book iv., ch. iii., § 16, and ch. iv., §§ 6, 10, 14.

have been, and he was, ordained. No particular record of the time and manner of his consecration is necessary: there is circumstantial evidence more than sufficient to establish the fact in any court of law.

But, still farther, Calvin himself bears witness that he was ordained. Thus, in his preface to his *Commentaries on the Psalms*, he says: "As David was raised from the sheepfold to the highest dignity of government, so God has dignified me, derived from an obscure and humble origin, with the high and honorable office of minister and preacher of the gospel."* But, since Calvin himself publicly and constantly taught the necessity of ordination to the ministry, in making this declaration he asserts also the *fact* of his ordination. Thus, also, when Cardinal Sadolet attacked the character of his ministry, he formally defended it in a long epistle addressed to that distinguished man.† In this defence he says: "Sed quum ministerium meum quod Dei vocatione fundatum ac sancitum fuisse non dubito, per latus meum sauciari videam, perfidia, erit, non patientia, si taceam hic atque dis-

* Hoc tamen, honorifico munere dignatus est, ut evangelii præco essem ac minister.—*Op.*, tom. iii.

† Ad. J. Sadoletum Responio, etc., in *Op.*, tom. viii., p. 105, etc.

simulem. Doctoris primum, deinde pastoris munere in ecclesia illa functus sum. Quod eam provinciam suscepi, legitimæ fuisse vocationis jure meo contendo." "Hoc ergo ministerium ubi a Domino esse constiterit," etc. That is, "When I see *my ministry,* which I doubt not was founded and sanctioned by the vocation of God, wounded through my side, it would be perfidy, and not patience, if I should remain silent and dissemble in such a case. I filled (or enjoyed the honor of) the office, first of professor, and afterward of pastor in that church, and I contend that I accepted of that charge, having the authority of a lawful vocation." "Since, then, my ministry has been established by the Lord," etc. If, then, the testimony of Calvin—published to the world in the face of the Reformed churches, and in full view of their sentiments and practice on the subject of ordination, in both which he concurred—can be relied on, then is his introduction to the ministry by a regular ordination beyond all controversy certain.

But, still farther, we have the evidence of the Reformers and Reformed churches themselves that Calvin was ordained. No one stood higher among them as a minister and a leader. He was chosen moderator of the presbytery at Geneva, and con-

tinued to fill that office till his death. He sat in the synod of the Swiss churches. When driven from Geneva he retired to Strasburg, where he was again constrained to enter upon the duties of a professor and a pastor by the agency of those distinguished men, Bucer, Capito, Hedio, Niger and Sturmius. Bucer also, in a letter addressed to him in 1536, expressly calls him "my brother and fellow-minister." Now, all these Reformers, as we have seen, held that ordination was both scriptural and necessary; and, since Calvin himself was of the same opinion, we must regard their testimony to his ministerial character and standing as proof positive of their belief that he was regularly ordained.

Beza, in his *Life of Calvin*, seems to declare as plainly as language could do it that he was ordained. He says: "Calvinus sese presbyterii et magistratus voluntati permisit; quorum suffragiis, accedente plebis consensu, delectus non concionator tantùm (hoc autem primum recusârat) sed etiam sacrarum literarum doctor, quod unum admittebat, est designatus, A. D. MDXXXVI." That is, "Calvin surrendered himself to the disposal of the presbytery and magistrates, by whose votes (the people having previously expressed their willingness) having been chosen not only preacher

(which office he had, however, at first declined), but also professor of divinity, he was set apart [or inducted into office] in the year 1536." Now, the very office and duty of a presbytery is, among other things, to admit and ordain men to the ministry. But Calvin was admitted to the ministry by a presbytery composed of Reformers who strongly insisted upon the importance of the rite of ordination. Calvin also concurred in their views of this ordinance as introductory to their ministry. And Beza says that, having been elected pastor by the people and having been approved by the votes of the presbytery, "he was set apart"—that is, in the regular way, by ordination. Beza never dreamt that in after-times a fact so necessarily implied in his statement and in all the circumstances of the case could or would be questioned.

This clear testimony of Beza is confirmed by that of Junius, the learned professor of divinity in Leyden. In opposition to Bellarmine, he affirms that the Reformers who preceded Calvin held and practiced Presbyterian ordination, and that by some of these, his predecessors, Calvin was himself ordained.*

* *Animadversiones in Bellarm. Controv.*, v. lib., cap. iii., in Dr. Miller *On Min.*, p. 407.

Certain it is that neither Romanists nor prelatists at that day ever questioned the fact that Calvin was ordained in the manner of the Reformed Church. The Romanists did not. Cardinal Bellarmine says that "neither Luther, nor Zuingle, nor Calvin, were bishops"—*i. e.*, prelates—"but only presbyters,"* thus evidently assuming as undeniable that they were all presbyters, and therefore ordained as such. Cardinal Sadolet seems also, from the controversy between him and Calvin, fully to have admitted Calvin's ordination according to the order of the Reformed Church, but to have denied the validity of such order, because administered out of the Romish Church. And hence the object of Calvin in his reply is not to establish the *fact* of his ordination, but the validity and scripturality of the orders of the Reformed Church.

Neither did prelatists then question the ministerial character and standing, and the consequent ordination, of Calvin. Dr. John Philpot, archdeacon of Winchester, martyr in 1555, in proving that the Reformed is the true Church by the "spirit of wisdom, that the adversaries thereof could never be able to resist," says: "Where is

* *Controv.*, v. lib., cap. iii., in Dr. Miller *On Min.*

there one of you all that ever hath been able to answer any of the godly, learned *ministers* of Germany who have disclosed your counterfeit religion? Which of you all, at this day, is able to answer Calvin's *Institutes*, who is *minister* of Geneva?" To this his popish inquisitor, Dr. Saverson, replied, not by denying the ordination or ministerial character of Calvin, but by blackening the character of the Reformers generally: "A godly minister, indeed, of receipt of cutpurses and runagate traitors," etc. "I am sure," replied Philpot, "you blaspheme that godly man, and that godly church *where he is a minister*, as it is your Church's condition, when you cannot answer men by learning, to oppress them with blasphemies and false reports."* This title he proceeds to give Calvin again in the very next sentence.† Bishop Jewell, the authorized expounder of the sentiments of the English Church, replies to the Jesuit Harding: "Touching Mr. Calvin, it is a great wrong untruly to represent so reverend a father and so worthy an ornament of the Church of God. If you had ever known the order of the church of Geneva, and had seen four thousand

*See *Examination and Writings of Philpot*, Parker Society edition, pp. 45, 46.

† Fox's *Examination of Philpot.*

people or more receiving the holy mysteries together at one communion, you could not, without your great shame and want of modesty, thus untruly have published to the world that by Mr. Calvin's doctrine the sacraments are superfluous."* Such also were the views entertained by Archbishop Cranmer, Bishop Hooper, Bishop Hall and many others. Hooker implies the ordination and perfect ministerial standing of Calvin in all that he says of him. He calls him "incomparably the wisest man"—*i. e.*, minister—"the French Church did enjoy since the hour it had him." Speaking of the Genevan clergy, he calls them "pastors of their souls," and then adds: "Calvin being admitted *one* of their preachers"—that is, one of these pastors, for they had no preachers except their regularly ordained ministers—"wherefore taking to him two of *the other* ministers," etc.†

Bullinger also, the contemporary of Calvin—of whom it is said that "all the fathers of the English Reformation held him in great esteem," and that "he did much service in the English Church," to whom Bishops Grindal and Horn, in a joint let-

* *Defence of the Apology.* See in Richmond's *Fathers of the English Church*, vol. viii., p. 680.

†*Eccl. Pol. Pref.*, vol. i., pp. 158, 159, Keble's edition.

ter to him, "attribute chiefly the favorable change which had taken place in the feelings of the people toward the Church," * and whose catechism was selected by the University of Oxford as one of those books which the tutors were required to use—most explicitly sustains the ministerial character of Calvin. In a work published by order of the convocation of the English Church in 1586, *cum gratia et privilegio regiæ majestatis* and as a manual for preachers,† he speaks of Calvin in these terms: "John Calvin, a godly and learned man, who with great commendation teacheth in the Church at this day, my fellow-minister and most beloved and dear brother." ‡

"Stancarus, also, the Polish Reformer, wrote a work, *Adversus Henricum Bullingerum, Petrum Martyrum et Joannem Calvium, et reliquos Tigurinæ ac Genevensis ecclesiæ ministros, ecclesiæ Dei perturbatores,* etc. (Basle, 1547). This work was replied to by Semler, and is referred to by Bishop Jewell in a letter to this Swiss Reformer. Now, here we have Calvin expressly denominated *a min-*

* Strype's *Mem.*, ii., 1, pp. 531, 532, Oxford edition; Strype's *Grindal*, p. 156, Oxford edition.

† Wilkin's *Concilia*, etc., vol. iv., pp. 321, 322.

‡ Bullinger *On the Sacraments*, Cambridge, 1840, p. 287.

ister by a Romanist in a controversial work written against him, and in the same sense in which Bullinger and Peter Martyr are called ministers. And it remains to be shown that Roman Catholic theologians are in the habit of applying the term 'minister' to persons whom they believe to be in no sense or manner ordained." * In *A Christian letter of certain English Protestants, unfeigned favorers of the present state of religion authorized and professed in England, under that reverend and learned man, Mr. R. Hooker*, written in 1590, it is said: "The reverend fathers of our Church call Mr. Calvin one of the best writers (Whitgift, *Def. of Ans.*, p. 390), *a reverend father* and a worthy ornament of the Church of God (Jewel, *Apol., Def. of*, pt. ii., p. 149, and *Fulke against Stapleton*, p. 71), not only defending the same doctrine, but also discharging him of slanderous reports wrongfully laid against him, knowing that by defaming the persons of ministers the devil of old time labored to overthrow the gospel of Christ." See quoted at length in Hanbury's edition of Hooker's *Works*, vol. i., pp. 22, 23. The whole is very strong. See also Wordsworth's *Eccl. Biogr.*, vol. iv., p. 269; vol. v., p. 544, etc. Of the opinion of the English

* See *Zurich Letters*, 1558–1579, Parker Society, p. 127.

Church as to the ordination of John Calvin in 1586 there can, therefore, be no longer any question.

Such, then, is the accumulated evidence in proof of the certain and necessary ordination of Calvin. It can only be denied by those who are willing, for sectarian purposes, to shut their eyes against the clearest light. It is asserted by Calvin himself, by Beza and by Junius. It is implied as necessary in the practice of the whole Reformed Church, of which Calvin approved, and which the Presbytery of Geneva must have carried out. It was allowed by Romanists and prelatists of his own age, and is implied in the estimation in which he was regarded by the whole Reformed Church.

But even were the ordination of Calvin doubtful, we have shown that he was so far ordained by the Romish Church as to be authorized to preach, that his authority as a minister depends not on the ceremony of ordination, and that, inasmuch as our present orders are in no degree dependent upon his, their validity is no way connected with the fact or certainty of Calvin's ordination.

While the validity of Romish and prelatical ordination hangs upon the baseless assumption of an unbroken line of personal successors of the apostles

—a mere figment of the imagination, and without any foundation in Scripture, reason or fact—our ordination is traced directly to Christ and his apostles, is based upon the clear evidence of Scripture and the undoubted practice of the primitive Christians, and is transmitted, not through one line, but through many, and not through any one order of prelates, but through the whole body of pastors and ministers who have successively existed in every age of the Church.

CHAPTER X.

THE CASE OF SERVETUS.

IT had been a favorite design of the late celebrated Dr. McCrie to publish the life of Calvin, and to set at rest the question of Servetus's death by instituting original researches in the archives and public library of Geneva. This labor was entrusted to his able son, the Rev. John McCrie, who visited the above city for that purpose and devoted more than a year to collecting valuable historical data for his father. But the venerable doctor died when on the eve of undertaking the work which was to crown his literary career. The Rev. John McCrie accepted as a sacred inheritance from his father and a fruit of his laborious investigation the now easy and distinguished task of rehabilitating the Reformer in public opinion, when a premature death disappointed the expectations of his friends and relatives.

The rehabilitation of Calvin, however, was delayed only to become the more sure by being en-

trusted to his enemies and taking place in the very city where the scenes reproachfully ascribed to him were enacted. A Unitarian clergyman of considerable talent and learning, the Rev. A. Reilliet, stimulated by the example of Dr. McCrie, ransacked the archives of Geneva, investigated carefully all the manuscripts and correspondence of the times preserved in the public libraries of Europe which bore on this case, and, although avowing bitter hostility to Calvinism, yet, as an impartial historian, he published, in 1844, the detailed result of his investigations, which is a complete verdict of acquittal of the mischievous and ungrounded charges brought against Calvin in reference to Servetus's death.

The conclusion to which Mr. Reilliet arrives, upon evidence which can never be contested, may be summed up as follows: Servetus, although opposed to the Trinity, was anything but a modern Unitarian. While the latter denies the divinity of Christ, *he* denied his humanity and considered him the absolute God; thus he was one degree farther removed from Unitarianism than the orthodox, otherwise a thorough pantheist, who asserted, even before his judges, that the bench on which he sat was God.

When Servetus came to Geneva he had just escaped from the prison at Vienne, where the Romish bishops had him sentenced to be burned by a slow fire. He concealed himself in a tavern under an assumed name. But, learning that the ministers had lost all influence upon a government which hated their rigid morals, that Calvin at the time was thwarted by them in everything, and that Geneva had become untenable for him, he emerged from secrecy in the hope of placing himself at the head of a political party and driving both Reformers and the Reformation from Geneva and substituting his own rules and tenets. The trial of Servetus was equally that of Calvin; indeed, the fate of the latter was at times the more imminent of the two, the president of the court and influential members of the council being his avowed and personal enemies. The struggle was forced upon him; the acquittal of the one was to be the sentence of the other. The awe of the Protestant governments might have saved Calvin from death, but not from imprisonment or perpetual exile, if Servetus had succeeded.

The court was partial to Servetus, and would fain have saved him if his triumphant overbearance had not ruined his cause; yet they would not pass sentence upon him, but left the case to the de-

cision of the four Protestant governments of Berne, Basle, Zurich and Schaffhausen. These all urged that the sentence of the Romish bishops be carried out against Servetus, and left no other alternative to the weak government of Geneva. *In the mean time the king of France claimed energetically the execution of the heretic who had escaped from his kingdom under sentence.* Servetus entreated as a favor to be executed in Geneva, and not by the slow fire of the Romish bishops.

A most important point established by Reilliet is that the condemnation of Servetus was *purely political.* He was sentenced by the magistrates of Geneva, not as a heretic, but as a *rebel*, who attempted to subvert the constitution of Geneva. The purely theological quarrel disappeared before this motive for condemning him. The judicial sentence in the list of charges brought against Servetus does not mention at all either the attacks against Calvin or those against the ministers of Geneva. Servetus well understood that if he could free himself from the suspicion of being a man of bad repute and dangerous to the public tranquillity, his doctrine by itself would not form a sufficient motive for condemning him, or, at least, would not draw down a very severe castigation.

When the sentence was irrevocably passed, Calvin and his colleagues used all their efforts to have the punishment mitigated by at least substituting the sword for the fire, but "the little council rejected the request of Calvin. It is to him, notwithstanding, that men have always imputed the guilt of that funeral pile which he wished had never been reared."

The *Free Church Magazine* has the following remarks under the heading, "Who are Calvin's Revilers?"

Calvin thought heresies injurious to the Church and to the State deserved to be punished with civil penalties, and he gave evidence to prove that Servetus was such a heretic. This he did in the sixteenth century, when such was the universally prevalent opinion. It is therefore concluded that Calvin was a ferocious bigot and monster of cruelty, that such is the spirit of the system of religion he taught, and that such, therefore, is the *spirit* of every one who now believes that system.

And who are they that, against all charity and reason and common sense, thus teach and affirm?

They are, first, papists; secondly, Unitarians; and thirdly, infidels. In retorting upon them the shamelessness of their conduct I will use the language of another.

1. What effrontery can be more gross than the popish denunciation of Calvin for his share in the trial, and his supposed share in the condemnation, of Servetus? The Church of Rome may well bear a grudge at Calvin. He has been, and by the influence of his writings and of the churches which he had a hand in forming he continues to be, one of their most formidable foes; but this constitutes no reason for such impudent injustice as that with which she is chargeable when she hunts his memory as a persecutor. We do not refer to Rome's *systematic* and wholesale persecution; we ask, From whom was Servetus fleeing when he came to Geneva, where he was apprehended and tried? He was fleeing from the Romish Inquisition at Vienne, in France. He was about to be condemned by that body to the flames for the very heresy for which he was subsequently condemned at Geneva. Meanwhile, he made his escape. Did the Romish Church in tenderness, and relenting here, allow the matter to drop? No; though the accused had fled, she pursued the case, condemned Servetus to the flames,

burnt him in effigy amid a pile of his works sharing the same fate, pronounced him an outlaw liable to the stake the first moment he returned to the territory of France. Nay, hearing that he had been apprehended at Geneva, whither he had gone —not kidnapped by Calvin, but as to the safest asylum then existing—she applied to the Genevese magistrates to have him delivered up to her summary justice, requesting that he might be sent back to them that they might "inflict the said sentence [of death], the execution of which would punish him in a way that there would be no need to seek other charges against him." The magistrates refused to surrender their prisoner. Not that they had any wish, probably, to carry out the trial—it would have saved them much trouble to have resigned him into the hands of those from whom he had fled—but by the laws of Geneva, often, and even recently, acted upon, the magistrates were not entitled to surrender an accused prisoner, even though the crime were committed beyond their territory. They were bound to try the case for themselves. It is owing to this accident—and nothing, surely, could be more purely accidental—that Servetus was burnt at Geneva by Protestant and Erastian magistrates, and not at Vienne by popish

inquisitors. But for this accident we should never have heard of "Calvin and Servetus." The name of the latter would have been lost among the thousands and tens of thousands of Romish *autos-da-fé*, and Gibbon would have had all the cruelty without being "scandalized." It may be added that, on the poor man himself being asked whether he would remain at Geneva or go back to Vienne, he implored them to try him at Geneva, and asked them, "above all, that they would not send him back to Vienne." "This," adds Reilliet, "was, amid two evils, to shun the more certain." Servetus had had experience of the intolerance of popery and of Protestantism, and, contrary to the opinion of Gibbon, he thought himself safer with the latter. And here, as we have seen, he would probably have escaped had not the popish king of France demanded his execution.

Such is the connection of the Church of Rome with the case of Servetus; and is it possible not to be filled with disgust when papists chime in with the infidel cry against the Reformed Church, and, above all, against John Calvin, as the atrocious persecutor of Servetus to death? From the language which is often used, one would suppose not only that the Church of Rome was unstained with

human blood, but that she had been a sorrowing and sympathizing defender of Servetus during all the days of his trial, and particularly on the day of his execution, that she had stood by him when Protestant Christendom was up in arms against him, and that she fain, at any sacrifice, would have rescued and honored him. How widely different the facts of history! Servetus was twice condemned to be burnt, and the first condemnation to burning was by the Church of Rome; and, marvellous to tell, her educated supporters have the face of brass to turn around and denounce Calvin, and all who hold the theological views and system of Calvin, as the exclusive persecutors of Servetus, and in representing him as guilty of a crime so atrocious as to overbalance and obliterate all the *autos-da-fé* of the Romish Church through revolving centuries. Was ever such matchless effrontery manifested out of the Church of Rome? Ah, the insolence and credulity of popery!

2. And now in regard to infidelity. She came too late into the world in an avowed form to be a very open persecutor, unless, indeed, we class many of the leading officials of the Romish Church, including popes and cardinals, in the

number. There can be little question that under a thin disguise not a few of them were skeptics; and if they were persecutors, as we know they were, then we have a specimen of persecution in its most shocking form—persecution by men for not believing what they themselves do not believe. But the intolerance of infidelity is not confined to such cases. Socinianism may be fairly ranked with skepticism. It disclaims all that is *peculiar* in divine revelation. Now, none have been greater partisans of Servetus, none more fierce denouncers of Calvin, than just the Socinian party. Indeed, if there were any religious body bearing the Christian name to which Servetus might be said to belong, the Socinian would be that body. His creed was nearer to theirs than any other. His party have all along given themselves out as the friends of free inquiry, of candor and toleration; indeed, they have assumed a monopoly of such qualities. They are *par excellence* the men of liberty, civil and religious; all else are but bigots and slaves. The small amount of what they believe and its freedom from the mysterious, they hold, gives them an advantage over others in the way of loving and practicing freedom.

But what says history in regard to their *practice* of freedom? Though but a small party, seldom allied with civil power as a religious body, they have continued to give full evidence that the spirit of intolerance is not limited to popery or orthodox Protestantism, that it is natural to man, and that there is nothing in their religious system, as there is in evangelical religion, to stay or extinguish it. Early in the days of the Reformation, Francis David, superintending office-bearer of a Socinian church in Transylvania, was thrown into prison, where he died, by his own Socinian friends. For what reason? Because he held that Christ, being a creature, should not be prayed to, while Socinus held that he should be so worshiped. This was all the difference in belief between David and Socinus —an inconceivably smaller difference than between Calvin and Servetus, for both, "rational Christians," held that Christ was merely a creature; and yet there was imprisonment terminating in death. Does this discover remarkable candor and liberty? Does it afford any ground for the Socinians to triumph, not over Calvin—for he had nothing to do with the *sentence*—but over the Erastian magistrates of Geneva when they condemned Servetus, as a blasphemer as well as a heretic, to the

flames? It would seem that indifference and skepticism in religion do not diminish severity in judging of others. Socinus, according to the difference at issue, was a greater persecutor than the magistracy of Geneva. Nor was this a solitary instance; the same spirit has appeared in later times. The Socinians assembled at Zurich in 1818 and the Socinian authorities in Church and State, as well as the Socinian populace in the Canton de Vaud in 1824, and for several years together, not forgetting the same parties in Geneva itself at the same period, all betrayed a spirit of as real persecution as ever appeared in Christendom; and then it is to be remembered that these intolerant and violent proceedings appeared, not in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, but in the first quarter of the nineteenth, at a period boasting of its advancement in knowledge and liberality and freedom. In short, with the exception of popery, which persecutes *upon principle*, and which, therefore, is ever at home in the business, the latest persecutors in Christendom have been the Socinian or skeptical party—the very party which all the while has been making a boast of its love of free inquiry and almost monopolizing the name of freedom. Persecuting proceedings at the present moment, in the same quarters of Switz-

erland, show, it would seem, that Socinianism and infidelity do not mean to make any change in the intolerant character which has hitherto belonged to them. Republicans in civil politics and Socinians, if not infidels, in religion have the honor, along with old popery, of being the persecutors of 1846. Perhaps at the existing moment the former surpasses the latter. It would be difficult, in any popish country pretending to any measure of light or freedom, to parallel the legislative proceedings and the practical doings of the Canton de Vaud under Socinian and infidel rule during the last six months.

But to bring out the intolerance of infidelity proper we must turn back for a little into the last, the eighteenth, century. Avowed infidels have taken great credit to themselves as the friends and patrons of freedom, and have even cried out bitterly against the supposed severity and intolerance of evangelical religion, particularly in its Calvinistic form. They have had no patience for the uncharitable and persecuting spirit of "the saints," and hence "Calvin and Servetus" has proved quite a stock in trade to them. But have they really any great ground of boasting? The fact of their being obliged to go so far back—nearly three hundred

years—for a single case is rather against their theory. We do not need to turn so far back for illustrations of the persecuting character of infidelity. Montesquieu, in his *Esprit des Lois*, lib. xii., c. v., has the candor to say: "I have not said that it is not necessary to punish heresy; I have only said that it is necessary to be very circumspect in punishing it." We dare say that none of the much-calumniated Reformers of the sixteenth century would quarrel with the statement. Is it necessary to remind the reader of the sentiment of Rousseau? —"The only way to hinder fanaticism (in other words, evangelical religion) is to *restrain* those who preach it. I see but *one way* to stop its progress, and that is to combat it with its own weapons. Little does it avail to reason or convince: you must lay aside philosophy, shut your books, *take up the sword and punish the knaves.*" Not long after the days of Rousseau there was an opportunity of showing what French infidelity understood by "fanaticism." Christianity in any form—corrupted as well as true—including the Bible and the Sabbath, was denounced as a fanaticism, and the disciples of Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, etc., engaged in a fierce and bloody persecution of the Christian name in point of atrocity surpassed only by the popish persecutions of the

Middle Ages. Where were the charity and candor and toleration of infidelity in the days of the French Revolution? And yet her crimes were perpetrated in the sacred name of liberty. It might be shown that leading British infidels, such as Hume and Gibbon, whatever might be their professed principles, were intolerant in practice, so far as their circumstances and the spirit of the age and indifference to all religion would allow. It is notorious that in their writings they took the side of the oppressor and the persecutor when he was arrayed against evangelical truth and its friends. Their sympathies were not with the religious sufferer, though suffering in the cause of civil freedom, but with the tyrant and the persecutor. Their practical treatment, too, of men holding evangelical truth did not correspond with their professed creed of universal toleration and non-responsibility for error. They will ever be found sarcastically or otherwise wounding the feelings of Christians, ridiculing and condemning them, and, in short, discovering anything but a tolerant and charitable spirit. Holding the views which these infidels maintained on the subject of truth and error, they ought to have been forbearing and kind; at least, full of commiseration for evangelical Christians. Is this

their spirit? Was it this spirit which characterized Hume in his social intercourse, or Gibbon when, denouncing Calvin, he declared that he was more scandalized by his supposed connection with the death of Servetus than with all the burnings of the Church of Rome? Even a recent and partial biographer of the former (Burton), speaking of an early work, says: "Though his [Hume's] philosophy is skeptical, his manner is frequently dogmatical; and, while illustrating the feebleness of all human reasoning, he seems as if he felt an *innate infallibility* in his own."

But the inconsistencies of former philosophers are small compared with those of a modern statesman and author whose religious as well as philosophical standing we feel some difficulty in ascertaining. We allude to Lord Brougham. No man of any name in modern times has been more unmerciful upon Calvin than His Lordship, and certainly no one has betrayed more ignorance of the real facts of the case which has drawn forth so keen a condemnation. Yet, of all men, Lord Brougham should have been the most tolerant and candid. If he does not belong to the skeptical, he at least belongs to the very liberal, school. He has proclaimed as the very foundation of toleration, and

that with a most oracular voice, that a man is no more responsible for what he believes than for the hue of his skin and the height of his stature. His name was wont to be associated with the advocacy of all that was free, whether civil or religious. Surely, then, Brougham should have pitied Calvin and been kind and charitable in his judgment. The Reformer believed, as a general doctrine, that flagrant and incorrigible heretics and blasphemers should be punished; such was his deliberate conviction. For this conviction he was no more responsible than for the hue of his skin and the height of his stature. And why, then, does Lord Brougham blame him and mercilessly misrepresent and traduce him for this his sober belief, any more than for his complexion and his stature? Does the result not plainly show that liberalism in religion and politics, whatever it may pretend, is essentially intolerant and persecuting? And if this be its character in the hands or heart of Lord Brougham, who had so many reasons for being, in this respect, on his good behavior, how much stronger must the same intolerant persecuting spirit prove in those who are less under restraint! Well may we ask, Is Brougham the man to condemn the intolerance of Calvin? Intolerant himself without a

reason—or rather in the face of strong reasons to the reverse—intolerant in the nineteenth century, is he the man, especially holding his own doctrine of non-responsibility, to rebuke the intolerance of the sixteenth century? What can be more ludicrous and inconsistent? Nothing save what proceeds from the same mint, and the new coinage has appeared but yesterday. Lord Brougham sets himself forth as the very patron and pattern of freedom in every form—so much so that, contrary to his own principles, he is entitled to rebuke with all severity the great Genevan Reformer within the British senate three hundred years after he has passed to his account. Surely, then, modern liberalism must be tolerant and charitable—indeed, the very foe of whatever savors of persecution. What is the fact? Lord Brougham but the other day *vindicated the Scottish site-refusers*, contending that their proceedings were involved in the just rights of landed property. The man who condemns Calvin as the most atrocious of persecutors *sees* no persecution (pity but that he could feel enough to know it!) in hundreds and thousands of his countrymen, far more devout and religiously intelligent than himself, being denied a piece of ground on which they may worship God, and being compelled, for summer

and winter together, to conduct their service under the open canopy of heaven. Lord Brougham sees no persecution in large congregations being driven to the high-roads or the seashore and being kept there for their religious worship since May, 1843, to the present hour—August, 1846. According to His Lordship's principle, there is no persecution though this state of things should be perpetuated for ever. Nay, he is indignant that any one should deem this to be persecution, and will not allow it to be so declared in his presence without an immediate and much-offended contradiction; and this is the liberal-minded censor of the intolerant Calvin! Who can compare the two cases and the part which Calvin took in the *trial* of Servetus (for he had no hand in the *sentence*)—a solitary case of severity—with the open, willful, wanton oppression of multitudes for years in free Britain in the free nineteenth century, and not come to the conclusion that, all circumstances considered, the one is much more aggravated and inexcusable than the other? But it is not needful to enter into any comparison. All that we intended to show—and with this remark we close—is that infidelity, in its different forms of Socinianism, avowed skepticism and irreligious liberalism, is most unjust in its judgment of Calvin in the

matter of Servetus, and, instead of being so candid and tolerant in itself as to be entitled to take high ground and become the reprover of others, is essentially intolerant, and is much less excusable in its intolerance than the men of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WILL OF JOHN CALVIN.

IN the name of the Lord, Amen! In the year 1564, and 25th day of April, I, Peter Chenalat, citizen and notary of Geneva, do witness and declare, that I was sent for by that excellent character, John Calvin, minister of the word of God in this church of Geneva, and enrolled citizen of the same, who, being indisposed in body, but sound in mind, said he was desirous to make his testament, and to express the judgment of his last will; and requested me to take it down and write what he should dictate and declare by word of mouth; which I profess I immediately did, and wrote down word by word as he pronounced and dictated, without omission or addition, in the following form, dictated by him:

In the name of the Lord, Amen! I, John Calvin, minister of the word of God in the church of Geneva, finding myself so much oppressed and

afflicted with various diseases that I think the Lord God has determined speedily to remove me out of this world, have ordered to be made and written my testament and declaration of my last will, in form and manner following: First, I give thanks to God that, taking compassion on me, whom he had created and placed in this world, he not only delivered me by his power out of the deep darkness of idolatry into which I was plunged, that he might bring me into the light of his gospel and make me a partaker of the doctrine of salvation, of which I was most unworthy; that with the same goodness and mercy he has graciously and kindly borne with my multiplied transgressions and sins, for which I deserved to be rejected and cut off by him; and has also exercised toward me such great compassion and clemency that he has condescended to use my labor in preaching and publishing the truth of his gospel. I also testify and declare that it is my full intention to pass the remainder of my life in the same faith and religion which he has delivered to me by his gospel, having no other defence or refuge of salvation than his gratuitous adoption, on which alone my safety depends. I also embrace with my whole heart the mercy which he exercises to-

ward me for the sake of Jesus Christ, atoning for my crimes by the merits of his death and passion, that in this way satisfaction may be made for all my transgressions and offences and the remembrance of them blotted out. I further testify and declare that as a suppliant I humbly implore of him to grant me to be so washed and purified by the blood of that sovereign Redeemer, shed for the sins of the human race, that I may be permitted to stand before his tribunal in the image of the Redeemer himself. I likewise declare that according to the measure of grace and mercy which God has vouchsafed me I have diligently made it my endeavor, both in my sermons, writings and commentaries, purely and uncorruptly to preach his word and faithfully to interpret his sacred Scriptures. I testify and declare that in all the controversies and disputes which I have conducted with the enemies of the gospel I have made use of no craftiness, nor corrupt and sophistical arts, but have been engaged in defending the truth with candor and sincerity.

But, alas! my study and my zeal, if they deserve the name, have been so remiss and languid that I confess innumerable things have been wanting in me to discharge the duties of my office in

an excellent manner, and unless the infinite bounty of God had been present, all my study would have been vain and transient. I also acknowledge that unless the same goodness had accompanied me, the endowments of mind bestowed upon me by God must have made me more and more chargeable with guilt and inactivity before his tribunal. And on these grounds I witness and declare that I hope for no other refuge of salvation than this alone—that, since God is a Father of mercy, he will show himself a Father to me, who confess myself a miserable sinner. Further, I will, after my departure out of this life, that my body be committed to the earth in that manner and with those funeral rites which are usual in this city and church, until the day of the blessed resurrection shall come. As for the small patrimony which God has bestowed upon me, and which I have determined to dispose of in this will, I appoint Anthony Calvin, my very dearly-beloved brother, my heir, but only as a mark of respect. Let him take charge of and keep as his own my silver goblet, which was given me as a present by Mr. Varanne; and I desire he will be content with it. As for the residue of my property, I commit it to his care with this request, that he restore it to his children at his death. I

bequeath also to the school for boys ten golden crowns, to be given by my brother and legal heir, and to poor strangers the same sum. Also to Jane, daughter of Charles Costans and of my half-sister by the paternal side, the sum of ten crowns. Futhermore, I wish my heir to give, on his death, to Samuel and John, sons of my said brother, my nephews, out of my estate, each forty crowns, after his death; and to my nieces Ann, Susan and Dorothy, each thirty golden crowns. To my nephew David, as a proof of his light and trifling conduct, I bequeath only twenty-five golden crowns.

This is the sum of all the patrimony and property which God hath given me, as far as I am able to ascertain, in books, movables, my whole household furniture and all other goods and chattels. Should it, however, prove more, I desire it may be equally distributed between my nephews and nieces aforesaid, not excluding my nephew David, should he, by the favor of God, return to a useful manner of life.

Should it, however, exceed the sum already written, I do not think it will be attended with much difficulty, especially after paying my just debts, which I have given in charge to my said brother, in whose fidelity and kindness I confide.

On this account I appoint him executor of this my last testament, with Laurence de Normandie, a character of tried worth, giving them full power and authority, without a more exact command and order of court, to make an inventory of my goods. I give them also power to sell my movables, that from the money thus procured they may fulfill the conditions of my above-written will, which I have set forth and declared this 25th day of April, in the year of our Lord 1564.

JOHN CALVIN.

When I, Peter Chenalat, the above-mentioned notary, had written this last will, the same John Calvin immediately confirmed it by his usual subscription and handwriting. On the following day, April 26, 1564, the same tried character, John Calvin, commanded me to be called, together with Theodore Beza, Raymond Chauvet, Michael Cops, Louis Enoch, Nicholas Colladon, James de Bordes, ministers and preachers of the word of God in this church of Geneva, and also the excellent Henry Scringer, professor of arts, all citizens of Geneva, and in their presence he hath declared and testified that he dictated to me this his will in the words and form above written.

He ordered me also to recite it in their hearing who had been called for that purpose, which I profess to have done with a loud voice and in an articulate manner. After thus reading it aloud he testified and declared it to be his last will and testament, and desired it to be ratified and confirmed. As a testimony and corroboration of this he requested them all to witness the same will with their hands. This was immediately done by them on the day and year above written, at Geneva, in the street called the Canons, in the house of the said testator. In proof and witness of this I have written and subscribed with my own hand, and sealed with the common seal of our supreme magistrate, the will above mentioned.

P. CHENALAT.

CHAPTER XII.

CALVIN'S VIEWS OF PRELACY.

ON this subject we will present to our readers the letters of the Rev. Dr. Miller in reply to Bishop Ives,* which appeared in the *Presbyterian* in January, 1842.

LETTER I.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: The following letter, and another which you will receive in a few days, were written a number of weeks ago and sent to Lincolnton, in North Carolina, for insertion in the *Lincoln Republican*, a weekly journal printed in that town. Very unexpectedly to me, the editor of that paper, after publishing Bishop Ives's letter, refused to give admission to my reply. On learning this, I requested the friend to whose care my communications had been sent to transmit them

* Bishop Ives, here referred to, figured about this time as a convert to popery, having resigned into the hands of the pope the insignia of his office as bishop of the Episcopal Church in North Carolina.—*Editor of the Board.*

to the *Watchman of the South,* in whose pages they would be likely to be seen by a large number of those who had been readers of the *Lincoln Republican.* But as Bishop Ives's letter has been republished in at least one paper in your city, and as in my reply to an attack in that paper which you were so good as to publish I referred to the letters which had been sent to North Carolina for further light on the same subject, I hope you will do me the favor to give insertion in the *Presbyterian* to the first letter, which you will receive herewith, and also to the second, which, with the permission of Providence, will reach you next week.

I make no apology for the trouble which I have given you for several weeks past in consequence of these ecclesiastical polemics. I regret them as much as any one can do. They were not of my seeking. I am not conscious on this or any other occasion of having ever gone into the field of denominational controversy, excepting when forced into it by fidelity to my beloved Church and to her Head, my Master, in heaven. To that high responsibility, however irksome controversy may be, especially at my time of life, I hope I shall never be suffered to be recreant. It would be much more agreeable to me to have no warfare

but with the open enemies of our "common salvation," but surely complaints of "attack" come with rather an ill grace from those who scarcely ever issue a paper without loading it with offensive missiles against all who are out of their pale. It has often amused me to see what a morbid sensibility to what they called "attacks" was manifested by those who were constantly dealing around them "firebrands and arrows," and professing at the same time, in words, to be "fierce for moderation" and "furious for peace."

I am, my dear sir, very respectfully yours,

SAMUEL MILLER.

PRINCETON, January 24, 1842.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Lincoln Republican*—

SIR: It was not until this day that I saw in your paper of the 10th instant a letter from Bishop Ives in reply to a letter from me directed to a clerical friend in your neighborhood, and published in your paper a few weeks before.

My letter was a private one, and published altogether without my consent. I kept no copy of it, and, while I distinctly remember its general substance, I have not the least recollection of its language. The bishop complains of the language

as strangely characterized by asperity and positiveness. As I have never seen even the printed copy as it appeared in your paper, I am wholly unable to make any other reply to this charge than to say that as I felt strongly on the subject, and was perfectly confident that the allegations which I opposed were altogether unfounded, I think it probable that in a private letter to a friend I expressed myself in terms which would have been modified if I had felt myself to be writing for the public eye. I had an interview with Bishop Ives in this place since the date of his letter, but, as I had not the least knowledge at that time of the publication of my own letter or of his reply to it, nothing, of course, respecting the matter passed at that interview.

More than two months ago a correspondent in North Carolina informed me that Bishop Ives, in a public discourse delivered a short time before, alleged that the celebrated Reformer, Calvin, had avowed a belief in the divine institution of episcopacy, and had requested to receive episcopal ordination from the bishops of England. My correspondent requested me to inform him whether there was any foundation for this statement. I ventured without hesitation to assure him that

there was not, and that no well-informed person could possibly make it. I have no recollection of having impeached the honesty or the veracity of the reverend preacher; for I had no doubt that he made the statement on evidence which he deemed sufficient, and I have still no doubt that he verily believed what he stated to be strictly true. But I meant to express, and presume I *did* express, strong confidence that the representation which he made was entirely incorrect. Bishop Ives is equally confident that his representation was well founded, and in his reply to my published letter has made statements which he seems to think perfectly decisive, and which, I dare say, many others will deem equally decisive, in support of his representation. And yet I will again assert, and hope I shall make it appear to the satisfaction of every candid reader, that that representation is destitute of all solid support in historical verity.

The first testimony which Bishop Ives adduces in support of his former statement is in the following words: "In his commentary upon 1 Tim. iv. 14 —a passage so much relied upon by Presbyterians— he gives an interpretation which makes it perfectly consistent with the episcopal character of Timothy."

The passage in our common translation reads thus: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

Calvin's commentary is as follows: "He admonishes him that he should employ the grace with which he was endowed for the edification of the Church. For it is not the will of the Lord that those talents should perish or be uselessly buried in the earth which he has deposited with any one to be profitably used. To neglect a gift is, through sloth and negligence, to leave it unemployed; so that, given up, as it were, to rust, it is worn out in no useful service. Therefore let each of us consider what abilities he has, that he may sedulously apply them to some use. He says that the grace was given to him by prophecy. How? Doubtless (as we said before) because the Holy Spirit, by revelation, had appointed Timothy to be set apart to the office of a pastor; for he had not been chosen only by man's judgment, as is customary, but by the previous declaration of the Spirit. He says that it was conferred with the laying on of hands; by which is meant that, in addition to the ministerial office, he was furnished also with the necessary gifts. It was a settled custom of

the apostles to ordain ministers with the imposition of hands; and, indeed, concerning this rite, its origin and meaning, I have treated at some length before, and a full account may be found in the *Institutes*. *Presbytery*.—Those who think that this is a collective name put for the college of presbyters, in my opinion, judge correctly, although, all things considered, I confess there is another sense not unsuitable—viz., that it is the name of an office. This ceremony he has put for the act of ordination itself. Therefore the sense is that Timothy, when called to the ministry by the voice of the prophets, and afterward ordained by the customary rite, was at the same time furnished for the performance of his duties by the grace of the Holy Spirit; whence we infer that it was not an empty rite, for to that consecration which men represented figuratively by the imposition of hands God imparted reality (or ratification) by his Spirit."

This is Calvin's commentary on the passage in question, and it is the whole of it. He who can find anything favorable to the episcopal character of Timothy here will be at no loss to find it in any document on earth. The only thing noticeable in its bearing on that point is the suggestion that, while in the opinion of Calvin the term "pres-

bytery" means the bench or body of presbyters, it may mean the name of an office. But surely this makes nothing in favor of the prelatical character of Timothy; for if this sense be admitted, then the statement will be that Timothy was ordained to the office of the presbyterate, or was made a presbyter.

The bishop next produces a fragment from Calvin's commentary on Titus i. 5, which he thus translates: "We learn also from this place that there was not then such an equality among the ministers of the Church but that some one had the pre-eminence in authority and counsel."

The candid reader will doubtless feel astonished when he reads this passage in connection with the context in which it stands. It is as follows:

"Presbyters or elders, it is well known, are not so denominated on account of their age, since young men are sometimes chosen to this office—as, for instance, Timothy—but it has always been customary, in all ages, to apply this title as a term of honor to all rulers, and as we gather from the First Epistle to Timothy that there were *two kinds* of elders, so here the context shows that no other than teaching-elders are to be understood —that is, those who were ordained to teach—be-

cause the same persons are immediately afterward called bishops. It may be objected that too much power seems to be given to Titus when the apostle commands him to appoint ministers over all the churches. This, it may be said, is little less than kingly power, for on this plan the right of choice is taken away from the particular churches, and the right of judging in the case from the college of pastors; and this would be to profane the whole of the sacred discipline of the Church. But the answer is easy. Everything was not entrusted to Titus as an individual, nor was he allowed to impose such bishops on the churches as he pleased; but he was commanded to preside in the elections as a moderator, as it is necessary for some one to do. This is a mode of speaking exceedingly common. Thus a consul or regent or dictator is said to create consuls because he convenes assemblies for the purpose of making choice of them. So, also, Luke uses the same mode of speaking concerning Paul and Barnabas in the Acts of the Apostles—not that they alone authoritatively appointed pastors over the churches without their being tried or approved, but they ordained suitable men who had been elected or chosen by the people. We learn also from this place

that there was not then such an equality among the ministers of the Church as was inconsistent with some one of them presiding in authority and counsel. This, however, is nothing like the tyrannical and profane prelacy which reigns in the papacy: the plan of the apostles was altogether different."

Is the reader prepared to find Bishop Ives separating the last sentence but one in this paragraph from what preceded and what follows, and calling it a declaration in favor of episcopacy, when its whole tenor is directly the other way? If the bishop had read one page farther on, he would have found in Calvin's commentary on verse 7 of the same chapter the following still more explicit declarations:

"Moreover, this place abundantly teaches us that there is no difference between presbyters and bishops, because the apostle now calls promiscuously by the second of these names those whom he had before called presbyters; and, indeed, the argument which follows employs both names indifferently in the same sense, which Jerome hath observed, as well in his commentary on this passage as in his epistle to Evagrius. And hence we may see how more has been yielded to the

opinions of men than was decent, because, the style of the Holy Spirit being abrogated, a custom introduced by the will of man prevailed. I do not, indeed, disapprove of the opinion that soon after the commencement of the Church every college of bishops had some one to act as moderator; but that a name of office which God had given in common to all should be transferred to an individual alone, the rest being robbed of it, was both injurious and absurd. Wherefore, so to pervert the language of the Holy Spirit as that the same expressions should convey a meaning to us different from that which he intended partakes too much of profane audacity."

It is worthy of remark that the work which contains this passage was published in 1549, in the reign of Edward VI., and when Calvin was carrying on a friendly correspondence with Archbishop Cranmer, yet he did not hesitate then to avow his Presbyterian sentiments.

Again, in his commentary on 1 Peter v. 1, written in 1551 and dedicated to Edward VI. of England, Calvin thus speaks:

"*Presbyters.*—By this title he designates pastors and whoever were appointed to the government of the Church. And since Peter calls himself a

presbyter, like the rest, it is hence apparent that this name was common; which, indeed, from many other passages, appears still more clearly. Moreover, by this title he claimed to himself authority, as if he had said that he admonished pastors in his own right because he was one of their number, for among colleagues there ought to be this mutual privilege; whereas, if he had enjoyed any pre-eminence of authority among them, he might have urged that, and it would have been more pertinent to the occasion. But although he was an apostle, yet he knew this gave him no authority over his colleagues, but that he was rather joined with the rest in a social office."

Bishop Ives, as a further proof that Calvin was persuaded of the divine right of prelacy, tells us that in his commentary on Gal. ii. 9 he represents it as "highly probable that St. James was prefect of the church of Jerusalem." "Now," says he, "a prefect is a chief and permanent ruler of others." Here, again, the slightest inspection of what Calvin does really and truly say will sufficiently refute this construction of his language. It is this:

"When the question is here concerning dignity, it may seem wonderful that James should be pre-

ferred to Peter. Perhaps that might have been done because he was the president (*præfectus*) of the church of Jerusalem. In regard to what may be included in the title of 'pillars,' we know that it is so ordered in the nature of things that those who excel others in talents, in prudence, or in other gifts, are also superior in authority. So, in the Church of God, by how much any one excels in grace, by so much ought he to be preferred in honor. For it is ingratitude—nay, it is impiety—not to do homage to the Spirit of God wherever he appears in his gifts. Hence it is that as a people cannot do without a pastor, so every assembly of pastors needs some one to act as moderator. But it ought ever so to be ordered that he who is first of all should be a servant, according to Matthew xxiii. 12."

In his commentary on Acts xx. 28, written in 1560, a few years before his death, Calvin expresses himself thus: "Concerning the word 'bishop,' it is observable that Paul gives this title to all the elders of Ephesus; from which we may infer that, according to Scripture, presbyters differed in no respect from bishops, but that it arose from corruption and a departure from primitive purity that those who held the first seats in particular cities

began to be called bishops. I say that it arose from corruption—not that it is an evil for some one in each college of pastors to be distinguished above the rest, but because it is an intolerable presumption that men, in perverting the titles of Scripture to their own humor, do not hesitate to alter the meaning of the Holy Spirit."

The bishop's extract from Calvin's work *De Necessitate Reformandæ Ecclesiæ* will also prove, when examined, quite as little to his purpose as any of the preceding. The passage, as given by him, is in the following words: "If they will give us such an hierarchy in which the bishops have such a pre-eminence as that they do not refuse to be subject to Christ, then I will confess that they are worthy of all anathemas, if any such shall be found who will not reverence it and submit themselves to it with the utmost obedience."

The passage, as really found in Calvin's work, is as follows. After speaking of the hierarchy of the Romish Church, of its claims to *uninterrupted succession* from the apostles, which he turns into ridicule, and of the gross departure of the bishops from the spirit and rules of the gospel, he says: "If the papists would exhibit to us such an hierarchy as that the bishops should be so distinguish-

ed as not to refuse to be subject to Christ, to rely on him as their only Head, to cherish fraternal union among themselves, and to be bound together by no other tie than his truth, then I should confess that there is no anathema of which they are not worthy who should not regard such an hierarchy with reverence and obedience. But what likeness to such an one is borne by that spurious hierarchy in which they (the Romanists) boast?" He then goes on inveighing against the arrogance and tyranny of the bishop of Rome by name, and showing how entirely different that system is from that to which Christ and his apostles gave their sanction, and even that which prevailed in the time of Cyprian.

It is well known that Calvin in all his writings maintained that there were bishops in the primitive Church, that every pastor of a congregation was a scriptural bishop; of course he might well say that if there were any who would not obey such bishops as were conformed to the will of Christ, they were worthy of all condemnation. Some have alleged, indeed, that his use of the word "hierarchy" (*hierarchiam*) in this passage proves that he could have had reference to no other than a prelatical government—that the term

is never applied to any other. This is an entire mistake. The word "hierarchy" simply implies "sacred" or "ecclesiastical government." It may be applied with as much propriety to Presbyterianism or independency as to prelacy. Calvin himself, in his *Institutes*, book iv., chap. v., speaks of that hierarchy or spiritual government which was left in the Church by the apostles, and which he expressly declares, in the same chapter, to be Presbyterian in its form.

Further, we are told, it seems, by Durell, in his *View of the Foreign Reformed Churches*, that Calvin, in writing to an "old friend," speaks of the office of bishop as of "divine institution or appointment." It is true that language of this kind is found in that letter, but the most cursory perusal of the whole letter will banish from any candid mind the idea that Calvin is here speaking of diocesan or prelatical episcopacy. Does not every intelligent reader know that that great Reformer believed and uniformly taught that the office of bishop—that is, of the primitive, parochial bishop—was a divine institution? It is evidently of this parochial episcopacy that he speaks when writing to his "old friend" in the language above quoted. The duties which he

urges upon him and the passages of Scripture which he quotes to enforce his counsel all show that it is that episcopacy alone which he maintains to be of divine appointment. A prelatist might as well quote the fourth chapter of the Presbyterian Form of Government, in which it speaks of bishops, as proof positive that it maintains the divine right of prelacy, as adduce the language cited by Bishop Ives to prove that Calvin was an advocate for the divine institution of prelatical episcopacy.

Such is the clear, indubitable testimony that the illustrious Reformer of Geneva was guiltless of the charge which has been brought against him. It is manifest that with perfect uniformity during the greater part of his public life, from 1535 to 1560, he steadfastly maintained the doctrine that the apostolic form of church government was Presbyterian, and not prelatical; that even in works which he dedicated to the king of England and to the lord protector, the highest nobleman in the realm, he still firmly contended for the scriptural doctrine of ministerial parity. The more closely I examine his writings, the more confirmed is my persuasion that nothing which wears a contrary aspect can be fairly produced from them.

II. The second allegation of Bishop Ives is that this eminent man wished to introduce prelacy into the church of Geneva, and that he united with others in requesting the English bishops to impart it to them.

If I do not greatly mistake, this allegation also is capable of being completely refuted. But, as I have already trespassed so far on the columns of your paper, I shall postpone to another week the remarks and the testimony which I have to adduce in regard to that point. In the mean time, I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant, SAMUEL MILLER.

PRINCETON, November 20, 1841.

LETTER II.

The second allegation of Bishop Ives is that Calvin was desirous of introducing diocesan episcopacy into the church of Geneva, and that he, with others, requested the bishops of England to impart it to them.

I have expressed a strong confidence that this statement is utterly unfounded and that it admits of satisfactory refutation. To attempt this refutation I now proceed.

And in proceeding to the execution of this task

my first remark is that, anterior to all search after testimony, the allegation is in itself utterly incredible. The character which the friends of prelacy are fond of imputing to John Calvin is that of an austere, fierce, tyrannical man fond of power and impatient of all opposition. His character, indeed, in this respect, has been much misunderstood and shamefully misrepresented. A degree of magisterial intolerance has been ascribed to him which he never manifested. Still, it is true that he possessed great decision of character, and that in following his convictions and laboring to attain his favorite objects he was hardly ever exceeded by any man. In this, it is believed, all are agreed. Now, if this man, who had such controlling influence in Geneva, had been desirous of introducing prelacy into his own pastoral charge and the neighboring churches, who was there to prevent it? Surely not the government. The secular rulers had been accustomed to prelacy all their lives, and would, no doubt, have regarded it with more favor than any other form of ecclesiastical regimen that could be proposed to them. Not his ministerial colleagues, for though they were by no means timid or pliant men, yet his influence over them seems to have been of the

highest kind; and if prelacy had been introduced, who can doubt that Calvin himself would have been the prelate? Who else would have been thought of? To him all eyes would have been instantly directed. No one acquainted with the history of Luther, Calvin, and several of the leading Reformers who acted with them, can hesitate a moment to believe that a bishop's chair was within the reach of every one of them if he had only signified his wish to the effect, or even intimated his belief that such an office was warranted by the word of God.

But suppose, in the face of all this improbability, that Calvin did wish to introduce prelacy; what occasion had he to go to England for the purpose of obtaining it? Were there not several men who had been bishops under the papacy who espoused the cause of the Reformation, and who would have been ready to lend their aid toward the consummation of the desired object? Besides, our episcopal brethren tell us that the Waldenses always had bishops, in their sense of that title, among them. If so, where was the difficulty of Calvin and his colleagues obtaining the episcopal succession, as the modern phrase is, from that body of pious believers? We know, indeed, that this assertion concerning the

Waldenses is unfounded. They had no such bishops. They themselves, in their correspondence with Œcolampadius in 1530, explicitly inform him that they had not; still, as an *argumentum ad hominem*, the argument is conclusive. Either there were no such bishops among that pious, devoted people, as prelatists claim, or Calvin, who knew the Waldenses intimately and had intercourse with them, acted a strange part in seeking an ecclesiastical favor from the British Church which he might quite as conveniently, to say the least, have obtained from churches in his native country, where many of them were settled, as well as in the valleys of Piedmont.

But there is another fact bearing on the point no less conclusive. The allegation is that Calvin and his friends begged for episcopal consecration from Archbishop Cranmer in the reign of Edward VI., when that prelate was at the head of the ecclesiastical affairs of England. Now, in that very reign, when this wish and request must have been pending, as shown in a former letter, we find Calvin repeatedly publishing to the world his opposition to prelacy and his solemn conviction that the Scriptures laid down a different form of church order, and one of these publications, containing one of his strongest assertions in favor of Presbyterianism, he ded-

icated to the king of England and sent to him by the hand of a special messenger; on the return of which messenger Cranmer wrote to Calvin an affectionate letter thanking him for his present and expressing an opinion that he could not do better than often to write to the king. (See Strype's *Memorials of Cranmer*, p. 413.) How is it possible for these things to hang together? If Calvin was capable of writing and printing these things, and of sending them by special messengers to the king and to Archbishop Cranmer, at the very time when he was negotiating with Cranmer to obtain from him an investiture of a different and opposite kind—if he was capable of acting thus, it would be difficult to say whether he was more of a knave or a fool. But I know not that any one who was acquainted with the history or the writings of that eminent man ever charged him with being either.

The first evidence that Bishop Ives adduces to support his allegation that Calvin desired to obtain prelatical episcopacy for his own church in Geneva is drawn from his language in the Confession of Faith which he composed in the name of the French churches. The friends of prelacy are heartily welcome to all the testimony which can be drawn from that Confession. Everything in it

which bears upon this point is in the following words: "As to the true Church, we believe it ought to be governed according to the policy which our Lord Jesus Christ has established—that is, that there be pastors, elders and deacons; that the pure doctrine may have its course; that vices may be corrected and repressed; that the poor and all other afflicted persons be succored in their necessities; and that all the assemblies be made in the name of God, in which both great and small may be edified. We believe that all true pastors, in whatsoever place they be, have the same authority and an equal power under one only chief, only sovereign and universal Bishop, Jesus Christ, and for that reason that no church ought to pretend to sovereignty or lordship over another." If this be evidence that Calvin wished to introduce prelacy into those churches on the Continent over which he had influence, then I know not what testimony means. The Confession is decisively antiprelatical in its character throughout, and the churches which were organized on its basis were as thoroughly Presbyterian as the Church of Scotland ever was. In the "Articles of Ecclesiastical Discipline," drawn up at the same time, it is declared that "a president in each colloquy (or

classis) or synod shall be chosen with a common consent to preside in the colloquy or synod, and to do everything that belongs to it; and the said office shall end with each colloquy or synod and council." (See Laval's *History of the Reformation in France,* vol. i., p. 118.)

Another source of proof on which Bishop Ives relies to show that Calvin wished for and endeavored to obtain prelacy from the English Church is found in the language which he addressed to the clergy of Cologne, blaming them for attempting to depose their archbishop because he was friendly to the Reformation. But could not Calvin reprobate this conduct without believing in the divine institution of the office which the archbishop held? Suppose Bishop Ives should become a Calvinist as to his theological creed, and suppose the Episcopal clergy of North Carolina should conspire on that account alone to expel him from his diocese; might not the firmest Presbyterian in the State remonstrate against their conspiracy without being an advocate for the divine right of prelacy? Might he not consider it much better to retain in an influential station one who was an advocate for evangelical truth, rather than thrust him out to make way for an errorist in doctrine as well as in church order?

A further testimony to which he appeals is that Calvin, in writing to Ithavius, a Polish bishop, styles him "illustrious and reverend lord bishop." He addresses him *illustris et reverende domine.* The last word, which is equivalent to "sir," Calvin addresses to the humblest curate to whom he writes. Of course no stress can be laid on that title. But what does the venerable Reformer say to this Polish dignitary? Urging him to give his influence decisively in favor of the Reformation, he writes to him in the following faithful language, a part of which only Bishop Ives quotes: "It is base and wicked for you to remain neutral when God, as with outstretched hand, calls you to defend his cause. Consider what place you occupy, and what burden has been laid upon you." This is proof enough that Calvin thought that Ithavius had been placed in his station by the providence of God, and that he was bound to employ all the influence and authority connected with that station for promoting the cause of truth, and certainly nothing more. I take for granted that Bishop Ives believes that the tyrant Nero was raised to the imperial throne by the providence of God, that in that station he had a great opportunity for doing good if he had been inclined to im-

prove it, and that any benevolent inhabitant of his dominions might have addressed his emperor in the very language addressed to Ithavius without believing in the divine right of monarchy.

An extract of a letter from Calvin to the king of Poland is also brought forward to show that he was an advocate for prelacy. Let the passage which Bishop Ives refers to be seen in its connection, and its worthlessness for his purpose will be manifest to the most cursory reader. It is as follows: "Finally, it is ambition and arrogance alone that have invented this primacy which the Romanists hold up to us. The ancient Church did indeed institute patriarchates, and also appointed certain primacies to each province, in order that by this bond of concord the bishops might continue more united among themselves, just as if, at the present day, one archbishop were set over the kingdom of Poland—not to bear rule over the others or to arrogate to himself authority of which the others are robbed, but for the sake of order to hold the first place in synods and to cherish a holy union among his colleagues and brethren. Then there might be either provincial or city bishops, to attend particularly to the preservation of order; inasmuch as nature dictates that out of each col-

lege one should be chosen on whom the chief care should devolve. But possessing an office of moderate dignity—that is, to the extent of a man's ability—is a different thing from embracing the whole world in unlimited jurisdiction."

Here it is evident that by the "ancient Church" Calvin meant, not the apostolic Church—for then there were no patriarchates, as all agree—but the Church as it stood in the fourth and fifth centuries. He thus fully explains this phrase in his letter to Sadolet, as well as in his *Institutes*. And it is no less evident that by the man in each college of ecclesiastics on whom the "chief care was to be devolved" he meant only a standing moderator, such as he describes in those extracts from his commentary which I detailed in my last letter. And besides, as Calvin knew that prelacy was universally and firmly established in Poland, he was much more anxious to plead for the promotion of the doctrines and spirit of true religion in that country than for pulling down its hierarchy. Hence he was disposed to treat the latter with indulgence if the former might have free course.

But Bishop Ives seems to lay the greatest stress for proof of his assertion on a statement found in Strype's *Memorials of Cranmer*, p. 207, and in his

Life of Bishop Parker, pp. 69, 70. The story, as related by Strype, is that Bullinger and Calvin and others wrote a joint letter to King Edward, offering to make him their defender, and to have such bishops in their churches as there were in England. The story is a blind and incredible one. Let us see the letter, and we will then believe that such a communication was sent, and not till then. The truth is Bonner and Gardiner were popish bishops, entirely out of favor during the reign of King Edward, and a letter directed to the king would be by no means likely to fall into their hands. Calvin is known to have kept up a constant correspondence with Archbishop Cranmer as long as the latter lived. Cranmer consulted him frequently, sought his counsel on a variety of occasions, and requested his aid in conducting the affairs of the English Reformation. The archbishop sent to Calvin the first draft of the English Liturgy early in the reign of Edward, requesting his advice and criticism respecting it. Calvin returned it, saying that he found in it some *tolerabiles ineptias* ("tolerable fooleries") which he could wish might be corrected. This criticism was well received, and the Liturgy was corrected agreeably to his wishes. This fact is attested by Dr. Heylin, one

of the bitterest opponents of Calvin and of Presbyterianism that ever lived. "The first Liturgy," says he, "was discontinued, and the second superinduced upon it, to give satisfaction unto Calvin's cavils, the curiosities of some and the mistakes of others, his friends and followers" (*History of the Presbyterians*, pp. 12, 207). Dr. Nichols, also, the author of a *Commentary on the Common Prayer*, bears testimony to the same fact in the following statement: "Four years afterward the Book of Common Prayer underwent another review, wherein some ceremonies and usages were laid aside and some new prayers added at the instance of Mr. Calvin of Geneva, and Bucer, a foreign divine who was invited to be a professor at Cambridge" (*Preface to his Commentary*, p. 5).

The fact is Cranmer and his coadjutors in the English Reformation had to struggle with great difficulties. The papists, on the one hand, assailed and reproached them for carrying the Reformation too far; while some of the most pious dignitaries and others in the Church thought it was not carried far enough. In these circumstances, Cranmer wrote often to the Reformers on the Continent, and sought advice and countenance from them, and to none more frequently than to Calvin, who wrote, we

are told, in return, much to encourage and animate Cranmer. Among other expressions of opinion, we are informed that Calvin blamed Bishops Hooper and Latimer, those decided friends of evangelical truth, for their persevering scruples respecting the habits or ecclesiastical vestments, which were then the subject of so much controversy. He gave it as his opinion that where the great and vital principles of the gospel were at stake it was bad policy for the friends of true religion to allow themselves to be alienated and divided by questions concerning clerical dress, or even the external order of the Church. The kind and friendly things of this nature which he so frequently uttered were no doubt misinterpreted as indicating a more favorable opinion of the prelacy of England than he really entertained or ever meant to express.

I shall trespass on your patience, Mr. Editor, only by making one statement more. Calvin was so far from ever alleging that the Genevan form of church government was adopted by him from necessity and not from choice that he, on the contrary, steadfastly maintained that it was strictly agreeable to the word of God and that which he felt himself bound by obedience to Christ to establish and defend. "Besides," says he, "that our con-

science acquits us in the sight of God the thing itself will answer for us in the sight of men. Nobody has yet appeared that could prove that we have altered any one thing which God has commanded, or that we have appointed any new thing contrary to his word, or that we have turned aside from the truth to follow any evil opinion. On the contrary, it is manifest that we have reformed our Church MERELY BY GOD'S WORD, which is the only rule by which it is to be ordered and lawfully defended. It is, indeed, an unpleasant work to alter what has been formerly in use, were it not that the order which God has once fixed must be esteemed by us as sacred and inviolable; insomuch that if it has for a time been laid aside, it must of necessity (and whatever the consequences should prove) be restored again. No antiquity, no prescription of custom, may be allowed to be an obstacle in this case that the government of the Church which God has appointed should not be perpetual, since the Lord himself has once fixed it" (*Epis. ad quendam Curatum, in Calvin Epist.*, p. 386).

Such are the testimonies which satisfy me that Calvin was a sincere and uniform advocate of Presbyterian church government, and that if he ever wished to introduce prelacy into his church

at Geneva we must despair of establishing any fact by historical records. That Bishop Ives was a real believer in the truth of all that he asserted I never entertained the least doubt. But I have as little doubt that it is totally destitute of any solid foundation. Either Calvin had no such desire as the bishop ascribes to him, or he was one of the most weak and inconsistent men that ever breathed. That, nobody ever thought him.

I am, Mr. Editor, yours respectfully,

SAMUEL MILLER.

PRINCETON, December 6, 1841.

CHAPTER XIII.

TESTIMONIALS TO CALVIN.

THE estimation in which the character and the learning of Calvin have been held may be seen from the following testimonies.

"He lived fifty-four years ten months and seventeen days, half of which time he passed in the sacred ministry. His stature was of a middle size, his complexion dark and pallid, his eyes brilliant even till death, expressing the acuteness of his understanding. He lived nearly without sleep. His power of memory was almost incredible, and his judgment so sound that his decisions often seemed almost oracular. In his words he was sparing, and he despised an artificial eloquence; yet was he an accomplished writer, and by the accuracy of his mind and his practice of dictating to an amanuensis he attained to speak little differently from what he would have written. The consistency and the uniformity of his doctrine, from first to last, are scarcely to be paralleled. Nature had formed

him grave, yet in the intercourse of social life no one showed more suavity. He exercised great forbearance toward all such infirmities in others as are consistent with integrity, not overawing his weaker brethren, but toward flattery and every species of insincerity, especially where religion was concerned, he was severe and indignant. He was naturally irritable, and this fault was increased by the excessive laboriousness of his life; yet the Spirit of God had taught him to govern both his temper and his tongue. That so many and so great virtues, both in public and in private life, should have called forth against him many enemies no one will wonder who duly considers what has ever befallen eminent men, both in sacred and in profane history. Those enemies brand him as a heretic, but Christ suffered under the same reproach. He was expelled, say they, from Geneva. True, he was; but he was solicited to return. He is charged with ambition—yea, with aspiring at a new popedom—an extraordinary charge to be brought against a man who chose his kind of life, and in this state, in this church, which I might truly call the very seat of poverty. They say again that he coveted wealth. Yet all his worldly goods, including his library, which brought a high price, scarce-

ly amounted to three hundred crowns. Well might he say in his preface to the book of Psalms, 'That I am not a lover of money, if I fail of persuading men while I live, my death will demonstrate.' How small his stipend was the senate knows; yet they can bear witness that, so far from being dissatisfied with it, he pertinaciously refused an increase when it was offered him. He delighted, forsooth, in luxury and indulgence! Let his labors answer the charge. What accusations will not some men bring against him? But no refutation of them is wanting to those persons who knew him while he lived, and they will want none among posterity with men of judgment who shall collect his character from his writings. Having given with good faith the history of his life and of his death, after sixteen years' observation of him I feel myself warranted to declare that in him was proposed to all men an illustrious example of the life and death of a Christian; so that it will be found as difficult to emulate as it is easy to calumniate him."—*Beza.*

"It is impossible to refuse him the praise of vast knowledge, exquisite judgment, a penetration which is uncommon, a prodigious memory and admirable temperance and sobriety. . . . Affairs public and

private, ecclesiastical and civil, occupied him in succession, and often altogether. Consulted from all quarters both at home and abroad, carrying on a correspondence with all the churches and all the learned men of Europe, with the princes and other persons of high distinction who had embraced the Reformed religion, it seems almost inconceivable how one man could be capable of so many things, and how he should not sink under the weight of the business which pressed upon him. The enemy of all pomp, modest in his whole deportment, perfectly disinterested and generous, and even entertaining a contempt for riches, he made himself not less respected for the qualities of his heart than admired for the powers of his understanding. When the council wished to make him a present of five and twenty crowns on occasion of his continued illness, he refused to accept it, because, he said, since he then rendered no service to the church, so far from meriting any extraordinary recompense he felt scruples about receiving his ordinary stipend; and a few days before his death he absolutely refused a part of his appointments which had become due. . . . He always presided in the company of pastors. Without envy they saw him, by reason of his rare merit, which raised him far above all

his colleagues, occupy the first place. . . . When his frequent illnesses prevented his being regularly present among them, they had requested Beza to supply his place. A few days after Calvin's death Beza declined this service, and at the same time recommended to them not in future to entrust an office of such importance permanently to any individual, safely as it might have been committed to Calvin, and due as it justly was to his services, . . . but rather to choose a fresh moderator every year, who should simply be considered as *primus inter pares*—presiding among his equals. This proposition was unanimously approved, and Beza himself, notwithstanding the pleas on which he would have been excused, was immediately chosen the first moderator, as possessing all the requisite qualifications; and the choice was sanctioned by the council."—*Spon's History of Geneva.*

"This [his superiority to the love of money] is one of the most extraordinary victories virtue and magnanimity can obtain over nature, even in those who are ministers of the gospel. Calvin has left behind him many who imitated him in his active life, his zeal and affection for the cause; they employ their voices, their pens, their steps and solicitations, for the advancement of the kingdom of

God; but then they take care not to forget themselves, and are, generally speaking, a demonstration that the Church is a bountiful mother, and that nothing is lost in her service. . . . Such a will as this of Calvin, and such a disinterestedness, is a thing so very extraordinary as might make even those who cast their eyes on the philosophers of Greece say of him, 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.' When Calvin was taking his leave of those of Strasburg in order to return to Geneva, they offered to continue his freedom and the revenue of a prebend they had assigned him. He accepted the first, but rejected the latter. . . . He carried one of his brothers with him to Geneva without ever thinking of advancing him to any honors, as others would have done with his great credit. . . . Even his enemies say he had him taught the trade of a bookbinder, which he exercised all his life."—*Bayle.*

"We should be injurious unto virtue itself if we did derogate from them whom their industry hath made great. Two things of principal moment there are which have deservedly procured him honor throughout the world: the one his exceeding pains in composing the *Institutions of Christian Religion*, the other his no less indus-

trious travails for exposition of Holy Scripture according unto the same *Institutions*. In which two things whosoever they were that after him bestowed their labor, he gained the advantage of prejudice against them if they gainsaid, and of glory above them if they consented."—*Hooker*.

"After the Holy Scriptures, I exhort the students to read the *Commentaries* of Calvin, . . . for I tell them that he is incomparable in the interpretation of Scripture, and that his *Commentaries* ought to be held in greater estimation than all that is delivered to us in the writings of the ancient Christian fathers; so that, in a certain eminent spirit of prophecy, I give the pre-eminence to him beyond most others—indeed, beyond them all. I add that, with regard to what belongs to commonplaces, his *Institutes* must be read after the Catechism, as a more ample interpretation. But to all this I subjoin the remark that they must be perused with cautious choice, like all other human compositions."—*Arminius*.

CHAPTER XIV.

CALVIN'S WIFE.

THE following account of Calvin's wife and of his domestic life and character will at once be very interesting and will very thoroughly corroborate our views of his character. It is given in the words of Monsieur G. de Felice, and is taken from the *New York Observer*.

IDELETTE DE BURE.

In my letter on the religious anniversaries of Paris, I said that M. Jules Bonnet, a distinguished writer who had spent several years in collecting the manuscript correspondence of Calvin, had read at the meeting of the Society for the History of French Protestantism a notice of Idelette de Bure, the wife of the great Reformer. The piece has since been published, and I am happy to communicate a sketch of it to your readers, adding some facts derived from other sources.

Idelette de Bure may be a new name even to well-informed theologians who have carefully studied the annals of the Reformation. I confess humbly that, for my part, I had hardly read here and there three or four lines on the wife of Calvin, and that I knew nothing of his domestic life. The same ignorance exists, probably, in a majority of those who will cast their eyes upon my letter. M. Jules Bonnet has, then, rendered a real and important service to the numerous friends of the Genevese Reformer: this notice of him is an historical resurrection.

Of Luther's wife everybody has heard—that Catherine de Bora who left a nunnery to enter the holy state of matrimony. The German Reformer often alludes to the character, habits and opinions of his dear Katy, as he called her. He shows us under her different aspects this good, simple-hearted woman who had little intellectual culture, but earnest piety. He acquaints us minutely with his domestic life. We weep with him over the grave of his Magdalen; we listen to his conversations with his son, to whom he speaks in poetic terms of the joys of paradise. In a word, Luther's house is thrown open and posterity sees the sweet face of Catherine de Bora, drawn by the

pencil of the illustrious Lucas Kranach, as distinctly, almost, as Luther's. Why is it not the same with Calvin and his wife? Why is their domestic sanctuary so little known?

The chief reason is found in the marked difference between the two great founders of Protestantism. Luther, the faithful representative of the German or Saxon genus, loved home-life and attached value to its least incidents; he was warm-hearted, ever ready to introduce his friends to the joys and sorrows of his fireside. He took pleasure in sharing with his wife and children all his own emotions. Calvin had also, as we shall see, an affectionate heart capable of strong attachments, but his natural disposition was reserved and austere. He would have regarded it as a weakness—perhaps an act of guilty pride—to draw frequent attention to himself, his sentiments, his personal concerns. He avoided expressions of warm feeling. "His soul, absorbed by the tragic emotions of the struggle he maintained at Geneva and by the labors of his vast propagandism abroad," says M. Bonnet, "rarely revealed itself, and only in brief words, which are the lightnings of moral sensibility, revealing unknown depths without showing them wholly to our view." No wonder that

Idelette de Bure remained half concealed—the more so as she lived only a few years and no children remained of their marriage. Yet among Calvin's letters are found interesting notices of this woman, who was certainly worthy of the illustrious man who had offered her his hand.

During his youth Calvin had not thought of contracting the bonds of matrimony; he could not, indeed, be married. Hunted by implacable persecutors; with no house in which to repose his head; forced to hide himself sometimes in Angoulême, sometimes in Bale; preaching from place to place and celebrating the holy Supper with some friends in the depths of woods or in caves; besides, occupied day and night in composing his book on the *Institutions of the Christian Religion*, which was intended to plead before the king, Francis I., the cause of his brethren who were condemned to frightful punishment,—how could he wish to be married? Would he have acted wisely to aggravate his evils by domestic cares, and to call a wife to bear half of so heavy a burden?

In August, 1536, Calvin became professor and pastor at Geneva. He had acquired a home, but still his labors were great. He had to struggle against the men called Libertines, who, after break-

ing the yoke of Romanism, abandoned themselves to the grossest licentiousness. They viewed the Reformation as a license to disregard all laws, human and divine. These Libertines occupied high offices in Geneva. They were in the councils of state and had behind them a disorderly populace. Calvin saw that the precious interests of the evangelical faith were jeoparded. He lifted his voice with invincible energy against the Libertines and refused to receive them at the holy table, exposing his blood, his life, to the discharge of his duty. Certainly this was not the moment to seek a wife.

He was banished from Geneva by the Libertine party in April, 1538; and, having been invited by the pious Bucer to come to Strasburg, he was appointed pastor of a parish of French refugees. Then, for the first time, marriage seems to have occupied his thoughts—or, rather, his friends, particularly Farel, tried to find for him a wise and good companion.

In a letter addressed to Farel in May, 1539 (he was then thirty years old), Calvin sketches his ideal of a wife. "Remember," he says to his friend, "what I especially desire to meet with in a wife. I am not, you know, of the number of

those inconsiderate lovers who adore even the faults of the woman who charms them. I could only be pleased with a lady who is sweet, chaste, modest, economical, patient and careful of her husband's health. Has she of whom you have spoken to me these qualities? Come with her . . . ; if not, let us say no more."

Another letter to the same pastor, Farel, dated February 6, 1540, shows us Calvin eluding skillfully a proposal of marriage. "There has been named to me," he says, "a young lady, rich, of noble birth and whose dowry surpasses all I could desire. Two reasons, however, induce me to decline: she does not know our language" (she was of Alsace, a German province) "and I think that she is too proud of her birth and of her education. Her brother, endowed with uncommon piety, and blinded by his friendship for me so as even to neglect his own interest, urges me to the choice, and the wishes of his wife second his own. What could I do? I should have been forced to yield if the Lord had not drawn me from my embarrassment. I replied that I would consent if the lady, on her part, would promise to learn the French language. She had asked for time to reflect."

The plan was abandoned. Calvin had foreseen it, and congratulated himself on not marrying a lady who, with a large fortune, was far from possessing the requisite simplicity and humility. This correspondence confirms what history relates of Calvin's character. He was eminently disinterested. A large dowry was a small thing in his eyes. Of what importance was it for him to have a rich wife if she was not a Christian? This is the same man who refused all the pecuniary offers of the sovereign council of Geneva, and hardly left wherewith to pay the expenses of his funeral—the paltry sum of fifty silver crowns.

A second proposal of marriage was made. The lady in question had not any fortune, but she was distinguished for her virtues. "Her praise is in every mouth," writes Calvin to Farel in June, 1540. So Calvin requested his brother, Anthony Calvin, in connection with other friends, to make proposals of marriage. Unhappily, he learnt some time after something unfavorable of the young lady's character. He withdrew the proposals, and wrote sadly to his colleague: "I have not yet found a companion; is it not wisest to abandon my search?" Thus he was discouraged by these fruitless attempts and seemed to give up the pros-

pect of marriage, as if the sweets of this union were not made for him. It should be remarked that though he possessed such manly firmness in questions of Christian faith, and though capable of giving his life for the cause of truth, Calvin was timid and reserved in little things of common life. "I am," he somewhere says, "of a shy, bashful disposition; I have always loved quiet, and I seek concealment. I know that I am naturally timid, soft and pusillanimous."

He preferred to remain a bachelor lest he should be ill received by the young ladies whom he addressed or should not make a good choice. An unexpected incident changed his resolution. There was in Strasburg a pious lady named Idelette de Bure. She was a widow, and all her time was spent in training the children she had had by her first husband, John Storder, of the Anabaptist sect. She was born in a small town of Guelders, in Holland. She came to the capital of Alsace as a place of refuge for victims of persecution. The learned Dr. Bucer knew Idelette de Bure, and it was he, apparently, who recommended her to Calvin's attention.

Externally, there was in this woman nothing very attractive. She was encumbered with several

children of a first marriage; she had no fortune; she was dressed in mourning; her person was not particularly handsome. But for Calvin she possessed the best of treasures—a living and tried faith, an upright conscience and lovely as well as strong virtues. As he afterward said of her, she would have had the courage to bear with him exile, poverty, death itself, in attestation of the truth. Such were the noble qualities which won the Reformer.

The nuptial ceremony was performed in September, 1540. Calvin was then thirty-one years and two months old. He was not constrained by juvenile passion, but obeyed the voice of nature, reason and duty. The papists who constantly reproach the Reformers are mistaken. Luther and Calvin, both of them, married at mature age; they did what they ought to do, and nothing more.

No pomp in Calvin's marriage, no ill-timed rejoicings. All was calm and grave, as suited the piety and gravity of the married pair. The consistories of Neufchatel and of Valengin, in Switzerland, sent deputies to Strasburg to attend this marriage—a striking mark of their attachment and respect for Calvin.

Hardly were the nuptials past when the leader of the French Reformation was constrained to leave the sweets of this domestic union. A diet was convened at Worms, in which most important questions relative to the future conditions of Protestantism were to be discussed. Calvin was naturally called to take part in them. He went to Worms, then to Ratisbonne, trying to conclude a peace between the two branches of the Reformation. During his absence he confided his wife to the care of Anthony Calvin and the noble family De Richebourg, where he fulfilled for some time the office of preceptor. The plague broke out at Strasburg, to his great alarm, and penetrated the house where Idelette de Bure lived. Louis de Richebourg and another inmate of the family had fallen prey to the disease. Calvin trembled for his dear wife. "I try," he writes, "to resist my grief: I resort to prayer and to holy meditations that I may not lose all courage." During his residence at Ratisbonne, where the fundamental interests of the new churches were discussed, Calvin received a deputation from Geneva begging him earnestly to return to that city. The Libertine party had disclosed their detestable designs. The strong will and the moral power of Calvin were necessary to

restore order. He resisted this call a long time. His hesitation, his tears, his anguish, attested that he viewed with a sort of horror the heavy burden which was laid upon him. At last he yielded, saying, "Not my will, O God, but thine, be done! I offer my heart a sacrifice to thy holy will." And on the 13th of September, 1541, he returned, after an exile of three years, to the city of Geneva, the face and the destinies of which he changed.

Before fixing his residence definitely in Geneva, Calvin had determined to go there and examine for himself the true state of things. He went alone, leaving his wife in Strasburg. But he had no sooner entered the walls of the city than the Genevese, fearing to lose once more a man of whom they stood so much in need, took all proper measures to detain him. The public councils decided that a messenger of state should be sent to Idelette at Strasburg, and should bring her, with her household (these were the terms of the resolution), into the house assigned to the Reformer. Thus did this humble Christian woman receive honors decreed to a princess of royal blood, having a messenger of state to guide and usher her into her new dwelling.

Recent researches have been published concern-

ing this house which the magistrates gave for Calvin's use after his return from exile. It had belonged formerly to an abbey, and was situated in an agreeable position which opened extensive views of the smiling borders of Lake Leman and the majestic amphitheatre of the Alps. It is remarkable that this house is now again in the hands of the Roman Catholics, who have converted it into a charitable institution under the protection of St. Vincent of Paul.

In spite of the honors which were accorded by the political councils of Geneva, Idelette de Bure was not ambitious to play a brilliant part in society. Always modest and reserved, practicing the virtues which suited her sex, and shunning noise and pomp with as much solicitude as many other women seek them, she consecrated her days to the duties of her pious vocation. Her private correspondence with Calvin on the rare occasions when he mentions his wife makes us see her under a very engaging aspect. She visited the poor, consoled the afflicted and received with hospitality the numerous strangers who came without knocking at the gate of the Reformer. In fact, every one recognized in her the pious woman who is described in Scripture as having "a meek and

quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," and worthy to be praised for ever for her works.

Idelette de Bure devoted herself particularly to the care of her husband. Exhausted by his constant labors, Calvin was frequently ill; and, treating his body roughly, after the example of Paul, he persisted amidst bodily suffering in performing the multiplied duties of his office. Then his wife would come and tenderly recommend him to take a little repose, and would watch at his pillow when his illness had assumed an alarming character. Besides (and this will surprise the reader), Calvin had at times, like ordinary men, desponding feelings: he was inclined to *low spirits*. "Sometimes," he himself says, "although I am well in body, I am depressed with grief, which prevents me from doing anything, and I am ashamed to live so uselessly." In these moments of dejection, when the heroic Reformer seemed, in spite of his energy and incomparable activity, to sink under the weight of our common infirmities, Idelette de Bure was at hand with tender and encouraging words which the heart of woman can alone find, and her hand, so feeble, yet so welcome and so affectionate, restored the giant of the Reformation who made the

pope and kings tremble on their thrones. Oh, the precious support and the magic power of a religious, attentive and loving wife!

Who can picture the salutary influence which the humble Idelette de Bure exercised over the Reformer? Calvin, as M. Jules Bonnet remarks, was often pained by the opposition with which he met, for men submit reluctantly to the designs of genius. "How often," adds the biographer, "in these years of struggle and of secret weaknesses which his correspondence reveals, did he become composed before the courageous and sweet woman who could make no compromise with duty! How many times, perhaps, he was soothed and quieted by one of those words which come from the heart! . . . And when afterward more gloomy days arrived, and the strife of opinions called forth Bolsec, Michael Servetus, Gentilis (Idelette de Bure was no longer alive), who can say how much the Reformer missed the advice, the sweet influence, of this woman?"

To return to our narrative. Idelette's greatest pleasure was to listen to the holy exhortations of Farel, Peter Viret and Theodore de Beza, who often sat at the hospitable table of their illustrious chief, and who loved to renew their courage in con-

verse with him. Sometimes, but rarely, she accompanied her husband in his walks to Cologne, to Belle-Rive, on the enchanting banks of Lake Leman. At other times, in order to repose after her fatigues, or when Calvin was called away to attend to the business of the Reformed churches, Idelette would go and spend some days at Lausanne with the wife of Viret. We see her in this Christian family in 1545 and 1548, careful not to give trouble to her hosts and troubled because she could not render them some good offices in return for those which they had shown her.

Bitter domestic afflictions came upon Calvin and his wife. The second year of their marriage, in the month of July, 1542, Idelette had a son. But, alas! this child, for whom they had devoutly returned thanks to God and offered so many fervent prayers, was soon taken from them by death. The churches of Geneva and of Lausanne showed the parents marks of sympathy. Feeble mitigation of so heavy a trial! It is easier to imagine than to express the grief of a mother's heart. Calvin lets us see his sorrow and that of his companion in a letter addressed, the 10th of August, 1542, to Peter Viret. "Salute all our brethren," says he; "salute also your wife, to whom mine

presents her thanks for her tender and pious consolations. . . . She would like to answer them with her own hand, but she has not even the strength to dictate a few words. The Lord has dealt us a grievous blow in taking from us our son; but he is our Father, and knows what is meet for his children." Paternal affection and Christian resignation are both displayed in Calvin's letters at this time. In 1544 a new trial of this kind afflicted the hearts of these parents. A daughter was born to them; she lived only a few days, as we see in a letter addressed in 1544 to the pastor Viret. Again a third child was taken from them. Idelette wept bitterly, and Calvin, so often tried, sought his strength from the Lord; and the thought occurred to him that he was destined only to have children according to the faith. So he said to one of his adversaries, who had been base enough to reproach him with his domestic losses: "Yes, the Lord has given me a son; he has taken him from me. Let my enemies, if they see proper, reproach me for this trial. Have not I thousands of children in the Christian world?"

The health of Idelette, already delicate, was impaired by these repeated griefs. The familiar let-

ters of the Reformer inform us that she passed her last years in a state of languor and suffering. Often he speaks of her as sick in bed and asks the prayers of her friends. Often he tells how she has revived. Calvin's affection for his wife appears in these communications. "Salute your wife," he writes to Viret in 1548. "Mine is her sad companion in bodily weakness. I fear the issue. Is there not enough evil threatening us at the present time? The Lord will perhaps show a more favorable countenance."

There was then at Geneva a learned physician named Benedict Textor. He was a pious man, full of zeal for the Lord, and a particular friend of Calvin. He was assiduous in his care of Idelette, and exhausted himself in seeking all the aid that human art could afford. But his efforts were fruitless: the fever increased. Calvin felt for the physician deep gratitude, and addressed him in the month of July, 1550, a letter dedicating to him his commentary on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Early in April, 1549, Idelette's condition inspired deep anxiety. Theodore de Beza, Hottman, Desgallers, and other colleagues of the Reformer, hastened to him to console him as well his wife in her last illness. Idelette, sustained even to

the end by piety, had consented to the sundering of her earthly ties; her only anxiety was concerning the fate of the children she had had by her first marriage. One of her friends asked her to speak of them to Calvin. "Why should I do so?" she answered; "what concerns me is that my children may be brought up in virtue. . . . If they are virtuous, they will find in him a father; if they are not, why should I recommend them to him?" But Calvin himself knew her wishes, and promised to treat her children as if they were his own. "I have already recommended them to God," said Idelette. —"But that does not hinder that I should take care of them also," said Calvin.—"I know well," said she, "that you will never abandon those whom I have confided to the Lord."

Idelette saw with calmness the approach of death. Her soul was unshaken in the midst of her sufferings, which were accompanied by frequent faintings. When she could not speak, her look, her gestures, the expression of her face, revealed sufficiently the faith which strengthened her in her last hour. On the morning of April 6 a pastor named Bourgoin addressed to her pious exhortation. She joined in broken exclamations which seemed an anticipation of heaven: "Oh, glorious resurrection!

O God of Abraham and our fathers! . . . Hope of Christians for so many ages, in thee I hope."

At seven o'clock in the morning she again fainted; and, feeling that her voice was about to fail, "Pray," said she; "oh, my friends, pray for me!" Calvin approaching her bedside, she showed her joy by her looks. With emotion he spoke to her of the grace that is in Christ, of the earthly pilgrimage, of the assurance of a blessed eternity, and closed by a fervent prayer. Idelette followed his words, listening attentively to the holy doctrine of salvation in Jesus crucified. About nine o'clock she breathed her last sigh, but so peacefully that it was for some moments impossible to discover whether she ceased to live or whether she was asleep.

Such is the account Calvin gives to his colleagues of the death of his beloved wife. Then he turned sadly his eyes upon his now desolate state of widowhood. "I have lost," he said to Viret in a letter of April 7, 1549—"I have lost the excellent companion of my life, who never would have left me in exile nor in pain nor in death. So long as she lived she was a precious help to me, never occupied with herself, and never being to her husband a trouble nor a hindrance. . . . I suppress my

grief as much as I can; my friends make it their duty to console me; but they and myself effect little. You know the tenderness of my heart, not to say its weakness. I should succumb if I did not make an effort over myself to moderate my affliction." Four days after, he wrote to his old friend Farel: "Adieu, dear and beloved brother; may God direct you by his Spirit and support me in my trial! I would not have survived this blow if God had not extended his hand from heaven. It is he who raises the desponding soul, who consoles the broken heart, who strengthens the feeble knees."

Under the weight of so grievous a loss, Calvin, however, was enabled to fulfill all the duties of his ministry; and the constancy he displayed amidst his tears excited the admiration of his friends, as we read it in Viret's reply to Calvin. The remembrance of her whom he had no more was not effaced from his heart. Although he was but forty years of age, he never thought of contracting other ties, and he pronounced the name of Idelette de Bure only with profound respect for her virtues and a deep veneration for her memory.

I close with these words of the biographer: "Calvin was great without ceasing to be good; he

joined the qualities of the heart to the gifts of genius. . . . He tasted domestic happiness in too brief a union, the secrets of which, dimly revealed by his correspondence, shed a melancholy and sweet light over his life." G. DE F.

APPENDIX.

ORIGIN OF THE CALUMNY THAT CALVIN WISHED TO ABROGATE THE LORD'S DAY.

THE authority of Calvin, too, has sometimes been adduced in support of loose views respecting the obligation of the fourth commandment. It is an old and a foolish calumny. We take the following extract from Beza, not only to meet this allegation—for Beza, as the personal friend of Calvin, must have known his sentiments perfectly—but to counteract any impressions which may be circulated to the disparagement of the faithfulness and purity of the church of Geneva in the days of Calvin:

"The year 1550 was remarkable for its tranquillity with respect to the church. The consistory resolved that the ministers should not confine their instructions to public preaching—which was neglected by some and heard with very little advantage by others—but at stated seasons should visit every family from house to house, attended by an elder and a decurion of each ward, to explain the Christian doctrines to the common people and require from every one a brief account of his faith.

These private visits were of great use to the church, and it is scarcely credible how much fruit was produced by this plan of instruction. The consistory gave directions that the celebration of the birth of Christ should be deferred to the following day, and that no festival should be observed as holy excepting the seventh, which is called the Lord's day. This proceeding gave offence to many, and, for the purpose of reproaching Calvin, there were some who circulated an unfounded report of his abrogating the Sabbath itself."

MELANCHTHON'S APPROBATION OF THE COURSE OF CALVIN TOWARD SERVETUS.

M. d'Aubigné was strictly correct in his historical allusions to this celebrated German Reformer. In a letter from Melanchthon to Calvin bearing the date of October 14, 1554, we find the following sentiments:

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: I have read your book in which you have clearly refuted the horrid blasphemies of Servetus, and I give thanks to the Son of God, who was the awarder of your crown of victory in your combat. . . . To you, also, the Church owes gratitude at the present moment, and will owe it to the latest posterity. . . . I perfectly assent to your opinion."

"I affirm also," says he in another letter, dated August 20, "that the Genevese senate did perfectly right in putting an end to this obstinate man, who

could never cease blaspheming, and I wonder at those who disapprove of this severity."

This opinion of Melanchthon was sustained by Bullinger, Peter Martyr, Zanchius, Farel, Theodore Beza, Bishop Hall, and others. Your correspondent must, therefore, admit that Melanchthon's name is properly coupled with that of John Calvin in the affair of Servetus, approve or disapprove of the sentence as we may. H. B.

THE TESTIMONY OF A UNITARIAN.

The following is from the pen of George Bancroft, author of *The History of the United States*, formerly minister plenipotentiary to England, a Unitarian in his religious opinions:

"It is in season to rebuke the intolerance which would limit the praise of Calvin to a single sect. They who have no admiration but for wealth and rank can never admire the Genevan Reformer; for, though he possessed the richest mind of his age, he never emerged from the limits of frugal poverty. The rest of us may be allowed to reverence his virtues and regret his errors. He lived in a day when nations were shaken to their centre by the excitement of the Reformation; when the fields of Holland and France were wet with the carnage of persecution; when vindictive monarchs on the one side threatened all Protestants with outlawry and death, and the Vatican on the other sent forth its anathemas and its cry for blood. In that day, it

is too true, the influence of an ancient, long-established, hardly-disputed error, the constant danger of his position, the intensest desire to secure union among the antagonists of popery, the engrossing consciousness that his struggle was for the emancipation of the Christian world, induced the great Reformer to defend the use of the sword for the extirpation of error. Reprobating and lamenting his adhesion to the cruel doctrine which all Christendom had for centuries implicitly received, we may, as republicans, remember that Calvin was not only the founder of a sect, but foremost among the most efficient of modern republican legislators. More truly benevolent to the human race than Solon, more self-denying than Lycurgus, the genius of Calvin infused enduring elements into the institutions of Geneva and made it for the modern world the impregnable fortress of popular liberty, the fertile seed-plot of democracy.

"Again, we boast of our common schools: Calvin was the father of popular education, the inventor of the system of free schools.

"Again, we are proud of the free States that fringe the Atlantic: the Pilgrims of Plymouth were Calvinists; the best influence in South Carolina came from the Calvinists in France; William Penn was the disciple of Huguenots; the ships from Holland that first brought colonists to Manhattan were filled with Calvinists. He that will

not honor the memory and respect the influence of Calvin knows but little of the origin of American liberty.

"Or do personal considerations chiefly win applause? Then no one merits our sympathy and our admiration more than Calvin—the young exile from France who achieved an immortality of fame before he was twenty-eight years of age, now boldly reasoning with the king of France for religious liberty, now venturing as the apostle of truth to carry the new doctrines into the heart of Italy, and now hardly escaping from the fury of papal persecution; the purest writer, the keenest dialectician, of his age, pushing free inquiry to its utmost verge, and yet valuing inquiry only as the means of arriving at fixed principles. The light of his genius scattered the mask of darkness which Superstition had held for centuries before the brow of Religion. His probity was unquestioned, his morals spotless. His only happiness consisted in 'the task of glory and of good,' for sorrow found its way into all his private relations. He was an exile from his place of exile. As a husband, he was doomed to mourn the premature loss of his wife; as a father, he felt the bitter pangs of burying his only child. Alone in the world, alone in a strange land, he went forward in his career with serene resignation and inflexible firmness: no love of ease turned him aside from his vigils; no fear of danger relaxed the nerve of his eloquence; no bodily infirmities checked the

incredible activity of his mind; and so he continued, year after year, solitary and feeble, yet toiling for humanity, till, after a life of glory, he bequeathed to his personal heirs a fortune in books and furniture, stocks and money, not exceeding two hundred dollars, and to the world a pure Reformation, a republican spirit in religion, with the kindred principles of republican liberty."

TEMPTATION OF JOHN CALVIN.

The following anecdote of Calvin, while it does much honor to his moral and religious character, is a curious historical fact which deserves to be generally known. It was related at Geneva by Diodati, one of Calvin's successors, to the first Lord Orrery, who flourished under the reign of Charles I. The extract is taken from *The State Letters and Memoirs of the Right Honorable Roger Boyle:*

"Eckius, being sent by the pope legate into France, upon his return resolved to take Geneva in his way on purpose to see Calvin, and, if occasion were, to attempt seducing him to the Roman Church. Therefore, when Eckius was come within a league of Geneva, he left his retinue there, and went, accompanied with one man, to the city in the forenoon. Setting up his horses at an inn, he inquired where Calvin lived; whose house being showed him, he knocked at the door, and Calvin himself came to open to him. Eckius inquiring for Mr. Calvin, he was told he was the person.

Eckius acquainted him that he was a stranger and, having heard much of his fame, was come to wait upon him. Calvin invited him to come in, and he entered the house with him, where, discoursing of many things concerning religion, Eckius perceived Calvin to be an ingenious, learned man and desired to know if he had not a garden to walk in. To which Calvin replying that he had, they both went into it, and there Eckius began to inquire of him why he left the Roman Church and offered him some arguments to persuade him to return; but Calvin could by no means be inclined to think of it. At last Eckius told him that he would put his life in his hands, and then said he was Eckius, the pope's legate. At this discovery Calvin was not a little surprised, and begged his pardon that he had not treated him with that respect which was due to his quality. Eckius returned the compliment, and told him if he would come back to the Roman Church he would certainly procure for him a cardinal's cap. But Calvin was not to be moved by such an offer. Eckius then asked him what revenue he had. He told the cardinal he had that house and garden and fifty livres per annum, besides an annual present of some wine and corn, on which he lived very contentedly. Eckius told him that a man of his parts deserved a greater revenue, and then renewed his invitation to come over to the Roman Church, promising him a better stipend if he would. But Calvin, giving him

thanks, assured him he was well satisfied with his condition.

"About this time dinner was ready, when he entertained his company as well as he could, excused the defects of it and paid him great respect. Eckius after dinner desired to know if he might not be admitted to see the church, which anciently was the cathedral of that city. Calvin very readily answered that he might; accordingly, he sent to the officers to be ready with the keys and desired some of the syndics to be there present, not acquainting them who the stranger was. As soon, therefore, as it was convenient, they both went toward the church, and as Eckius was coming out of Calvin's house he drew out a purse with about one hundred pistoles, and presented it to Calvin. But Calvin desired to be excused; Eckius told him he gave it him to buy books, as well as to express his respect for him. Calvin, with much regret, took the purse, and they proceeded to the church, where the syndics and officers waited upon them; at the sight of whom Eckius thought he had been betrayed and whispered his thoughts in Calvin's ear, but Calvin assured him to the contrary. Thereupon they went into the church, and Eckius, having seen all, told Calvin he did not expect to find things in so decent an order, having been told to the contrary. After having taken a full view of everything, Eckius was returning out of the church; but Calvin stopped him a little, and, calling the syndics and officers to-

gether, took the purse of gold which Eckius had given to him, telling them that he had received that gold from this worthy stranger, and that now he gave it to the poor, and so put it all into the poor-box that was kept there. The syndics thanked the stranger, and Eckius admired the charity and modesty of Calvin.

"When they were come out of the church, Calvin invited Eckius again to his house, but he replied that he must depart, so, thanking him for all his civilities, offered to take his leave. But Calvin waited upon him to the inn and walked with him a mile out of the territories of Geneva, where with great compliments they took a farewell of each other."

Eckius was a very learned divine, professor in the university of Ingolstadt, memorable for his opposition to Luther, Melanchthon and other Reformers in Germany. He died in 1543, aged fifty-seven.

CALVIN'S ORDINATION.

The chief difficulty which I had occasion to mention in noticing the allegation made by Romanists and prelatists that Calvin was never ordained was the fact that there is no record, in so many words, of its time and place and of the persons who officiated at the ordination. I have shown, however, that there is every evidence that could be adduced for the certainty of the fact, and for its universal recognition by all his contemporaries, Romish, Anglican and Reformed.

But the difficulty may be met by an *argumentum ad hominem*. Has any one, I ask, ever questioned the ordination of Bishop Butler, or does any one now doubt whether he was really and canonically ordained? The answer must be given in the negative. And yet, on the ground assumed by our opponents, his ordination may be altogether denied. For in his *Life* by Mr. Bartlett it is recorded that "at what time he took orders doth not appear, nor who the bishop was by whom he was ordained." And again: "It is perhaps a little singular that, notwithstanding his private memoranda, which refer to the date of almost every other event connected with his public life, there is no allusion either to the period of his ordination or to the prelate who conferred orders upon him."

This, certainly, is very singular, and more than a parallel to the case of Calvin. Was Calvin educated in the Romish Church? Butler was brought up in the Presbyterian Church. Had Calvin difficulty in making up his mind to embrace the Reformed opinions? So had Butler in receiving the tenets of the Establishment. Did Calvin embrace and avow the Reformed opinions respecting the Church and the ministry and ordination? So did Butler those of the Established Church in England. And do these avowed opinions of Butler and this very change of connection make it certain that he must have been regularly ordained, although there is such mysterious absence of all

proof? Then how much more certainly must we conclude that such was also the case as it regards Calvin! For if such an omission can be supposed in England, at so recent a period and under the circumstances of the case, how much more might it be looked for in the earliest period of the Reformation and amid the incipiency of all their arrangements!

CALVIN'S MISSION TO BRAZIL.

It was during this dark time that an event occurred which has escaped the notice of many American antiquaries and historians. We mean the emigration of French Protestants to Brazil. To call this a mission Dr. Henry thinks inaccurate.* Yet it appears from the letters of Richer, the preacher of the refugees, that they were not without some thoughts of converting the heathen. Villegagnon, a knight of Malta, gave the great Coligny reason to believe that he was about to secure a spot in America where the persecuted Protestants might find a refuge. The admiral was won by the benevolent prospect. A small island—we suppose it to have been near Rio de Janeiro—was occupied by Villegagnon in the name of Coligny. Ministers of the word were now demanded, and Richer and Chartier were sent from Geneva. But by a hideous treachery these poor nonconformists of the South, less favored than their later brethren of Plymouth, were fiercely pursued under the French

* Guericke, *Kirchengeschichte*, p. 1151.

edicts. Four of them witnessed a good confession and were cast into the sea; the rest escaped to France. Jean de Léry, afterward a minister at Berne, was an eye-witness of these atrocities.

The unusual interest which attaches to this somewhat obscure chapter in history justifies us in adding a few more particulars. Nicolas de Villegagnon was vice-admiral in Brittany under Henry II. Being disappointed and chagrined because his services were not sufficiently recognized, he put himself at the head of the expedition aforesaid. There were two excellent ships, and they set sail in 1555. The natives were kind, but the settlers had more than the usual trials of colonists. Richer was fifty years of age, and Chartier about thirty. Even on their voyage they were ill-treated by the people of Villegagnon. They landed on the 7th of March, 1556, and showed their letters, to which was appended the name of Calvin. The perfidious governor did not at first throw aside the mask, but went even so far as to partake of the Lord's Supper according to the Protestant rite, as appears from Richer's letter to Calvin.

In this letter are several things worthy of more special notice than we can here bestow. There is much *naïveté* and piety in the good missionary's report. The people are rude, he says, though he knows not assuredly that they are cannibals. They have no sense of right and wrong and no idea of God; so that there is little hope of making Christ known

to them. Nothing can be hoped until there are more settlers, by whose converse and example the Indian people may be Christianized.

A certain learned doctor (Cointiac) used the preachers ill and declared himself an enemy of the Huguenot worship. In this he was now joined by Villegagnon, who suspended Richer from his functions. Chartier was sent to Europe to represent the matters in contest. Villegagnon now began to persecute, and forbade the wretched exiles to escape. Richer and his companions retired to the forest, where they were humanely treated by the savages. But others, who endeavored to get off by ship, were seized and imprisoned. Villegagnon, in his new zeal for popery, condemned five Huguenots to death under the *ordonnances* of Francis I. and Henry II. One Bordel was cast into the sea to die as a martyr; so died also Vermeil and Pierre Bourdon. Villegagnon returned to France and wrote against the gospel, but was answered by Richer. The persecutor died wretched and impenitent.

THE END.

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